Thursday, January 7, 2010 ★★ Vol. 15 / No. 30

Suspicious luggage at 2 US airports suspend flights WORLD / A20

What to do with New Year leftovers LIFESTYLE / C3

1,000 families in Taguig face eviction METRO / A12

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Kenney's RP stint tough act to follow

By Jocelyn R. Uy

FROM FEEDING POOR schoolchildren to meeting with Manny Pacquiao to dancing the "Pa-paya" song on a prime-time TV show, outgoing US Ambassador Kristie Kenney has set a tough act to follow for diplomats posted in the Philippines.

No less than the Armed Forces of the Philippines acknowledged Kenney's accomplishments by honoring her yesterday in a testimonial parade traditionally given to a retiring officer or a head of state, and rarely to diplomats.

"Nobody in this country, not even the MILF or the communist rebels, will contest the now common knowledge that Ambassador Kenney is the most popular and best-liked ambassador, American or otherwise, in Philippine history," said Gen. Victor Ibrado, AFP chief of staff.

In November, US President Barack Obama

KENNEY'S A13

TESTIMONIAL PARADE Outgoing US Ambassador Kristie Kenney on Wednesday reviews a military honor guard with Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Victor Ibrado (center) at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City. Ibrado, who presented Kenney a plaque of appreciation, said not even the communist or communist rebels could deny that she "is the most popular and best-liked ambassador, American or otherwise, in Philippine history." MARTIN SAN DIEGO

Comelec office ransacked

GMA spent ₱459M in Pampanga, says solon

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MORE THAN HALF A BILLION PESOS had been spent by President Macapagal-Arroyo for the construction of roads, drainage canals and municipal buildings in her home district in Pampanga just 12 months before she rose as its representative in the House in May.

This was disclosed yesterday by Akbayan Rep. Risa Hontiveros, who said the P459 million lavished in Pampanga's second district was nine times the allocation granted to each of the members of the House for their annual infrastructure projects.

Hontiveros said she was su-

GMA SPENT A13

HANDOUT Presidential candidate Joseph Estrada on Wednesday hands what appears to be a tightly rolled paper bill to outstretched hands in Tondo, Manila. Estrada and running mate Jejomar Binay earlier distributed gifts in the area. EPA/LEANDRO

200 troops guarded Maguindanao facility

By Charlie C. Señase
Inquirer Mindanao

SHARIFF AGUAK, MAGUINDANAO—SUSPECTED thieves broke into and ransacked the Commission on Elections (Comelec) provincial office in this capital town, but police officials were surprised over the report, saying the place was heavily secured.

"They (thieves) could have [entered] ... the premises during the holidays because we learned of [it] ... only on Monday when we reported for work," Ezeliño Orbase, provincial election supervisor, said late Tuesday.

In Manila, two senators yesterday raised suspicions about the theft and urged the Comelec head office to investigate. They said it might be part of cleaning up the cheating more committed there during the 2004 and 2007 elections.

"The suspicion is very strong that they're clearing the office of incriminatory documents," said Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr.

Orbase said the intruders gained entry to the Comelec office through the windows by detaching the jalousies. They took

COMELEC A7

Bishop hits hidden agenda

By Dona Pazzibugan
TJ Burgonio,
and Gil Cabacungan Jr.

MOVES IN THE HOUSE OF Representatives to set the election of delegates to a convention in October to amend the Constitution confirm the "hidden agenda" behind President Macapagal-Arroyo's decision to run for a congressional seat, ac-

BISHOP A13

QC jail move a security nightmare

By Marlen Ranoa
and Norman Bordadora

MOVING ANDAL AMPATUAN Jr. from the National Bureau of Investigation jail to Manila to the cramped Quezon City Jail may result in a security night-

mare, according to both Acting Justice Secretary Agnes Devanadera and Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno.

"You can bring him to the Quezon City Jail, but can we assure that he would still be alive next week? It's our responsibility to protect his life," Puno yesterday told reporters at Camp Crame.

Elsewhere, Devanadera said: "He is a high-risk prisoner. We want him to have trial subset."

Ampatuan Jr., a scion of the

QC JAIL A4

Sulu politics heats up over armored vehicles

By Ed General
and John S. Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

ZAMBOANGA CITY—WHO wants to know if Gov. Abdusakur Tan of Sulu owns at least two armored vehicles with mounted .50 cal. machine guns?

His rival in the May balloting,

Rep. Munir Arbison, does. He wants police and military officials to conduct an investigation.

"It is highly unauthorized and unquestionably illegal," said Arbison, who is on his third and final term as congressman and is running for Sulu governor.

SULU POLITICS A6

Surprise! Planas new GMA mouthpiece

By Christian V. Esguerra

WHILE OTHERS ARE LEAVING the administration, Charito Planas, a former stalwart of the anti-Marcos movement, has joined it as a mouthpiece of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

At her maiden press briefing in Malacañang, Planas yesterday said that she was approaching her

SURPRISE! A13

HEAVY ARMOR Sulu Rep. Munir Arbison claims that Sulu Gov. Abdusakur Tan owns this armored vehicle and wants the House to investigate. EDWARD AGUILAR/INQUIRER MINDANAO BUREAU

Obama castigates execs over security screw-up

WASHINGTON—US PRESIDENT Barack Obama on Tuesday scolded 20 of his top officials over the botched Christmas Day terror attack on a Detroit-bound airliner, taking them jointly to task for "a screw-up that could have been disastrous" and should have been avoided.

After that 90-minute private reckoning at the White House Situation Room, a grim-faced Obama informed Americans that the government had enough information to thwart the attack ahead of time but that the intelligence community, though ordered to do so, did not "connect those dots."

"That's not acceptable, and I will not tolerate it," he said, standing solo to address the issue publicly for the fifth time—and the first in Washington—since the Dec. 25 incident.

Obama did not say who, if

OBAMA A4

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

PCSO 6/55 DRAW NO. 2010-001
22 10 27 20 14 21
6/45 DRAW NO. 2010-001
8 6 1 3 6
4D DRAW NO. 2010-001
8 8 4 2 7 2 3
PEGASUS 6/49 DRAW NO. 2010-001
7 24 25 29 34 36
P4,912,484.40

MAGUINDANAO ARMY COMMANDER

General's promotion 'a disgrace'

By Lila B. Saberola

PARTY-LIST REPRESENTATIVE SATUR OCAMPO yesterday denounced the recent promotion of Maguindanao Army commander Maj. Gen. Alfredo Cayton as a "disgrace" to the Armed Forces and "an insult to the victims of the Maguindanao massacre and their families."

Cayton has been named Army vice commander (the second highest post in this branch of the Armed Forces Province) to this, he was the commander of the 6th Infantry Division in Maguindanao that operates in the site of the gruesome election-related massacre of 57 people on Nov. 23.

Ocampo of the militant Bayan Muna group noted that Cayton's promotion came despite the fact that the general was relieved of his post in the wake of the massacre, ostensibly to pave the way for an independent probe, including complaints that he had ignored the victims' requests for security.

Cayton was subsequently cleared of negligence but has yet to explain the huge cache of firearms—many bearing government markings—found in properties of the politically powerful Ampatuan clan, the main suspects in the massacre.

Ocampo speculated that Cayton's promotion could be meant as a "bribe" to ensure the military of Arroyo's silence on what really has been going on in Maguindanao.

Soldiers accountable

He also said the military is not listening to tongue by rewarding officials from Maguindanao who, while not directly involved in the slays, failed to protect the victims or act on the culture of violence there.

"Was the promotion in exchange for his silence? It must be stressed that no one believes that the military had output in the massacre—even indirectly and through their inactions. Cayton and the soldiers under his command are accountable," he said in a statement.

The statement, allegedly left by Datu Unsay Mayor Andal Ampatuan Jr., reportedly involved about 100 armed men, including police and members of government-backed paramilitary organizations. The Ampatuans, according to some reports, operated a private army under the aegis of military authorities for many years.

The Ampatuans were allies of President Macapagal-Arroyo, although they were kicked out of the administration party following the massacre.

Ocampo dared Cayton to reject his promotion out of a sense of conscience since he failed to protect the civilians, and to apologize to the victims' families. The military official "would be better off retiring," he added.

Noynoy scores high in vote-rich Davao

SEN. BENIGNO "NOYNOY" Aquino III is the top choice of Davao City residents among the presidential candidates, according to a survey released by Mass Ruhiga Davao.

The survey, conducted on Dec. 17 by Pulso Davao, showed that Aquino was the choice of 45.44 percent of respondents, according to Rolando Lacierda, the Aquino campaign spokesperson.

Coming in second was vice president and concurrent presidential candidate Joseph Estrada, who scored 22.44 percent.

Election lawyer Henry Lanot placed former Manuel Villar, who has consistently ranked second to Aquino in national surveys, received 16.71 percent while administration candidate Gilbert Teodoro got 5.64 percent. The survey had 8,000 respondents.

"This is consistent with the Pulse Asia and SWS (national) survey results which put Noynoy on top although in this survey Manny Villar is a distant third. It's friends who is in second place," Lacierda said.

He said the Pulso Davao survey results were important because Davao City had an of had your 707,214 registered voters, making it one of Mindanao's most vote-rich urban areas.

Aquino's Liberal Party got a boost in the city when Duterte, Davao City's very popular mayor, declared support for LP vice presidential candidate Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas II over a year after declaring his presidential plans. Teodoro has slightly improved on his ratings, but still lags behind Senators Benigno Aquino III and Manuel Villar Jr., and deposed president and convicted plunderer Joseph Estrada.

According to Estrada, who chairs the ruling Lakas-Kampi-CMD's advisory council, Teodoro is very knowledgeable as a trade negotiator, and a able to discuss them well in public forums.

"He can articulate very very well, but his explanations are being overshadowed by the perception that elections are just about popularity," he said.

Estrada said he would not be surprised if other candidates bashe and try to avoid presidential debates. "I don't count have noticed that it's their bubbles' bust," he said.

He disputed the oft-repeated observation that Teodoro was being targeted down by President Macapagal-Arroyo's supporters.

"There are those who are saying that her endorsement is a kiss of death. But if the administration's programs are projected well in his campaign, that will be an asset," he said.

He quoted one opinion that said the accomplishments and endorsements of an incumbent administration could translate to 25 to 26 percent of the vote.

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Debates might do the trick for Gibo

By TJ Burgonio

HOPING THAT PUBLIC SPEAKING and being very knowledgeable on current issues are Gilbert Teodoro's strongest suits, Malacañang is positioning the administration presidential candidate to engage his rivals in debates in every province.

More than pressing Deals, Teodoro will be able to shore up his flagging popularity ratings through debating with the other candidates who have had a head start in campaigning, said Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

"I'm banking on it. He really lacks exposure. If in the next four and a half months, Gibo can go around the country, and in every capital debate in once appearance, and if the students get to know in him, his ratings might just go up," Ermita said in person.

He said he was arranging a debate for Teodoro, a bar topnotcher who holds a master's degree from the Harvard Law School, in the Batangas State University in Batangas City.

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SC upholds claim vs GSIS

By Norman Bordadora

THE SUPREME COURT HAS UPHELD A Court of Appeals decision ordering the Government Service Insurance System to pay a pension almost P400 million for 78 pieces of property that the state-run pension fund had sold off but which turned out not to have been part of a mortgage it had foreclosed in 1994.

In a decision penned by Associate Justice Teresita Leonardo de Castro, the Supreme Court's 1st Division affirmed the appellate court's imposition of the amount to be paid to Rosario Santiago, the widow of Eduardo Santiago, the claimant to the disputed real estate located in San Antonio Village in Pasig.

The Pasig Regional Trial Court had in 1997 ordered the GSIS to pay Santiago more than P1 billion but the appellate court reduced the amount to P399 million.

The high court denied the GSIS petition questioning the appellate court decision ordering it to pay Santiago for the properties that it had mistakenly sold as part of the foreclosed properties of spouses Jose and Soledad Zubiaru.

The appellate court gave credence to the Pasig sheriff's report that the owners of properties were already occupied by persons other than the Zubiarus when the GSIS took possession of the properties.

"The court, in discussing this petition, is aware of the predicament that petitioner finds itself in as there is no dispute that petitioner failed to look at both sides and at the entirety of the case now before us," the Supreme Court said.

"In doing so, we overlooked that rights of private citizens had already arisen and we uphold each rights," it added.

Court records showed that the properties, totalling 33, 000 square meters and consisting of 78 parcels of land in San Antonio Village, were originally owned by spouses Jose and Soledad Zubiaru who took out loans from GSIS amounting to more than P3 million.

The couple defaulted on their loans and the GSIS foreclosed on their San Antonio Village properties.

The 78 lots were the subject of a legal dispute between the Zubiarus and Eduardo Santiago which Santiago had won.

The Zubiarus had already ceded their interest in the properties to Santiago but the GSIS were ahead and sold the 78 lots despite their not being included in the foreclosure.

Agri execs to fight plunder suit

By Riza T. Olchondra

AGRICULTURE OFFICIALS DENIED THERE were any irregularities in the award of a postharvest project and are preparing to file a counter-suit against those behind a plunder suit filed against them at the Office of the Ombudsman.

In a joint statement, Department of Agriculture officials called the plunder case a nuisance or "harassment" suit.

The complaint, filed by the militant Magsasaya fisherfolk group and Anakpawis party-list representatives, charged Presidential Macapagal-Arroyo, Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap and six officers of the state-owned National Agribusiness Corp. (Nabcor) with plunder, graft and robbery.

The case involved the award, through allegedly irregular bidding, of a P455-million contract to the Integrated Refrigeration Systems and Services Inc. (IRSSI) for the purchase of 98 units of ice-making machines and liquid freeze machines for distribution to selected municipal ports in the country.

Yap said he was "never a part of the procurement process as I am neither the chairman nor president of Nabcor. Not a single piece of evidence was shown that I had intervened in the procurement process."

Yap also raised the question of who may be behind such plunder charges.

He said officials have information that the suit was orchestrated by a group that "smears money" from winning bidders by joining government bidding and later filing trumped-up fraud charges against the eventual winners.

"We are compiling evidence against that group and will expose them at the proper time," Yap said, while asking the Office of the Ombudsman to dismiss the complaint.

Nabcor spokesperson Kathyrin Pesquiso said the object of the project are saving to 25 cooperative because they are composing the production cost of mobile, sets-of-the-art freezers with those of conventional, permanent and single-purpose ice-making machines.

"It's like comparing apples and oranges," she said.

SC pressed on TRO vs Luisita land distribution

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

A MILITANT LAWMAKER IS URGING the Supreme Court (SC) to lift the three-year old temporary restraining order (TRO) against the distribution of the 6,000-hectare Hacienda Luisita property of the Cojuangco-Aquino family in Tarlac.

Anakpawis party-list Rep. Rafael Mariano made the appeal on news that the Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. (RCBC), the Cojuangco-Aquino's mortgage holder, has fenced off more than 170 hectares inside the vast estate.

"The TRO has been dragging for more than three years now rendering Hacienda Luisita's distribution locked in legal battle. It's long overdue for the Supreme Court to uphold Luisita farmers' rights to the lands and put an end to the Cojuangco-Aquinos decades-old feudal rule in Tarlac," Mariano said.

The Presidential Agrarian Reform Council) revoked the stock distribution option scheme proposed by the Cojuangco-Aquino management in 2005 and pushed for their compliance to land distribution under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program. The Cojuangco-Aquino management filed an appeal with the SC and succeeded in getting a TRO in 2006.

Mariano made the appeal on fears that the management's lawyers have been steadily increasing their physical presence in the property. He said RCBC built the fences shortly after it sought intervention in the SC claiming that 500 hectares of Hacienda Luisita had been mortgaged to the bank.

"The construction of fences only shows how the Cojuangcos can't and abused the Supreme Court-issued TRO to deny farmers of their rightful claim," Mariano added.

"All these maneuvers by the Cojuangcos... from the mortgaging of the lands, land-use conversions, up to the present construction of fences by the RCBC—are all intended to evade Luisita's distribution and strengthen their control over the lands," said Kilusang Magbubukid sa Pilipinas deputy secretary general Randall Echanis.

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Correction

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2 more bodies found in wreck

DOTC orders safety review of shipping lines

By Paolo G. Montecillo

THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION and Communications has ordered a sweeping review of the safety standards of local shipping companies to prevent a repeat of several sea mishaps that occurred over the holidays.

Transport Secretary Leandro Mendoza yesterday said he would form a task force that would scrutinize the safety procedures of individual shipping companies.

Among other things, the task force will be authorized to make random safety checks on the companies' shipping operations and immediately ground ships that are found not to be complying with minimum safety standards.

"Governments, anytime, don't inherit your accidents once. That's why we really have to develop a new culture of safety," Mendoza told reporters.

The task force will be made up of representatives from the Maritime Industry Authority (Marina), the Philippine Coast Guard and the Philippine Merchant Marine Academy.

Lack of competent seafarers

Marina Administrator Dante Bautista said eight ships have sunk in the past eight years, each one of them owned by business men.

This indicates that there has been a scarcity of competent seafarers in the country, said Mendoza.

Accidents in the country are always caused by inexperienced crew and the lack of competence of the crew and the shipmaintaining the ships," he said.

Most of the country's competent seafarers are now abroad, working for foreign companies, Mendoza said. These fault because of the skills and training necessary to run ships properly and safely to sail.

Mendoza said the government aims to create a culture of safety among shipping industry stakeholders, and this will start with a comprehensive screening of local seafarers.

Random checks

Thereupon Lorenzo, the undersecretary for maritime transport, said the task force will make random checks on vessels.

"If these ships do not pass the minimum guidelines, they'll be given notice to either stops up or stop sailing," Lorenzo said.

At a meeting with shipowners yesterday, the DOTC released a set of recommendations aimed at promoting higher safety standards that conform to international shipping norms.

These included the phaseout of wooden-hull passenger vessels, the stricter implementation of small boats and the long-term retention age caps on vessels.

The DOTC also wants the shipping industry to adopt passenger boarding system of online to ensure proper accounting and documentation of passengers.

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A message from Bello! "Justice Man" Bello III
Pwersa ng Hustisya

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, January 7, 2010
After Epiphany
Feastday of Pentalfish

1st Reading: 1 Jn 4:19-5:4
Gospel: Lk 4:14-22

Jesus acted with the power of the Spirit, and so his ministry fulfilled the words about him: spread the tradition all that was done. He began teaching in the synagogues and everyone praised him.

When Jesus came to Nazareth where he had been brought up, he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath as he usually did. He stood up to read and they handed him the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Jesus then unrolled the scroll and found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and new sight to the blind, to free the oppressed and announce the Lord's year of favour."

Jesus then rolled up the scroll, gave it to the attendant and sat down, while the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he said to them, "Today these prophetic words come true even as you hear them."

All agreed with him and were lost in wonder, while he kept on speaking of the grace of God. Even then they asked, "Where else but Joseph's son?"

COMMENTARY

When we tell our faithful something in the synagogues, preaching the Good News about the kingdom and healing people who heal all kinds of illness and sickness.

Two things must go together in life
If we are truly disciples of Jesus:
The inner proclaim
And to live in the world,
And to outwardly must do good to everyone,
One without the other is only half the Christian life.

Globe hales NTC to court over billing

By Paolo G. Montecillo

MANILA, 1ED CLOBE TELECOM HAS ASKED the Court of Appeals to stop the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) from implementing a new per pulse billing system.

The company yesterday sought a temporary restraining order (TRO) to keep the NTC from implementing a Dec. 6 order changing the current per-minute billing to the per-six second charge.

The NTC said the change to the billing system would lower charges' bills for consumers because they would no longer pay full-minute charges for short calls.

The agency's second largest mobile network said the NTC's order was tantamount to "illegal taxi fining."

It would "distort the free market forces that have worked well in bringing rates down for consumers," Globe argued.

"One look at the platform of telecommunications companies' offers in the market is enough to show that the free market is functioning well, and that spirited competition exists between Globe and its competitors," the company said in its 62-page petition.

"The intense competition in the telecommunications industry has benefited consumers immensely with prices of voice calls and text messages dropping constantly," the company added.

The company said competition in the market for voice and text services has even given birth to unlimited plans that allow consumers to make free voice calls or text limited calls for small sums per day, something that would have been unheard of less than decade ago.

Globe said NTC's mandate specifies that the regulator should leave industry rates alone if healthy competition among service providers exists and leads to lower rates for consumers.

The company also complained that telecommunications firms were not consulted properly when the NTC finalized the memorandum on per-second billing. Data crafting it done is impossible for companies to comply.

Earlier, the NTC criticized local telecom firms for not complying with the order first Globe and rival Smart Communications, Inc. insisted that they had done enough to meet the order's requirements by allowing consumers to avail to a per-pulse system with the use of prefixes.

Mayon steam no cause for alarm

A PLUMES OF STEAM ENVELOPED PARTS of restive Mayon Volcano early yesterday morning but volcanologists said there was no cause for alarm.

The phenomenon, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs), was caused by rain hitting down on its heated slopes.

"The interaction of rain water with the hot lava deposits caused 10-meter high dirty white clouds that drifted towards southwest," Phivolcs explained in its latest bulletin.

The steam clouds were observed along the Bonga gully, about 300 meters down the slope of the volcano's crater from 7:00 to 7:20 a.m.

Phivolcs also detected four volcanic earthquakes and 21 rockfall events, or the detachment of lava fragments from the volcano's upper slopes.

A moderate amount of white vapour from the 2,462-meter mountain was also observed during cloud breaks. Alexis Papa

Hi! Happy New Year!
• New Enrollments
• New Plans
• Better Self Expression
SPEEDPOWER

No quick fix to poverty, poll bets told

By Hilda Dizon

THOSE AIMING FOR THE PRESIDENCY make extravagant claims about emancipating Filipinos from poverty but they'd be lucky if they can make a dent on the problem by the time they end their six-year term, if they get elected.

It takes five years to one annual improvement in the lives of poor families, said Social Welfare Undersecretary Cecilia Ca-pulong Yangco.

"In other words, when [a new President] starts office, whatever is the poverty line, 50 percent, for example, when he finishes his term, it should only be 20 percent," Yangco said.

"You cannot let go of a poverty alleviation program after only a year," she said.

From her four decades of social work, Yangco has observed that it takes five years at least to sustained intervention for a poor family to be delivered from impoverished state.

And that is, if circumstances are normal, she said.

Yangco said it would take longer, some six to eight years, for "difficult cases" like dysfunctional poor families with "problems with values" to start living better lives.

She said the Department of Welfare and Social Development has been implementing a pilot project in Dolores, Quezon, in which the government's poverty-alleviation programs, De Kalidad-CIDSS and the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), are converged.

The community-driven development project, Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (Kalahi-CIDSS), aims to empower residents in the country's poorest municipalities to participate in community projects such as building schools or water systems.

334 foreigners barred in 2009

By Jerome Aning

MORE THAN 300 FOREIGNERS WERE barred from entering the country in 2009 for carrying improper travel documents, the Bureau of Immigration (BI) said yesterday.

In a report to Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan, BI airport operations division chief Ferdinand Sayoyd said a total of 334 foreigners were refused entry at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport from January to December last year for having incomplete or spurious travel documents.

Sayoyd said the number does not include those who were turned back for other reasons such as being deemed a public danger or being included in the BI blacklist or watchlist.

Foreign passengers may be considered improperly documented for various reasons, foremost of which are not having the required entry visa and failure to present return tickets.

Sayoyd also reported that for bringing the 334 improperly documented aliens into the country, 23 airline companies were fined. Fines of P50,000 for each excluded passenger or a combined total of P1.2 million.

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Puno confident PNP will crush private armies by May

By Marlon Ramos
and Jocelyn R. Uy

INTERIOR SECRETARY RONALDO PUNO yesterday expressed confidence that the Philippine National Police (PNP) would be able to carry out President Macapagal-Arroyo's directive to dismantle private armies before the May elections.

"In the next few days you will see the actions of the PNP principally and all other agencies in the... bomba-pitong-araw," Puno said, who met with police, jail and fire officials during their traditional New Year's call in Camp Crame.

He said additional checkpoints would be established nationwide to contain the movement of insurgent forces.

He also said he had ordered a review of police-sanctioned civilian and paramilitary groups following the election-related massacre of 57 people in Maguindanao allegedly carried out by gunmen that included militia groups.

"We should see if the parties... have met with those groups were organized to still them. If not, we must disband them," Puno said. "Just wait and see our enemy is going after these persons."

He said the police "will not wait" for the findings of an independent body that Mrs. Arroyo created to lead the investigation into the provincial killings, but will pursue the "strongest cases" against the perpetrators.

"We already know the situation and what steps we should take," he said. "The commission has a bigger mandate to come up with a more comprehensive analysis."

PNP Director General Jesus Verzosa said various intelligence police units were overseeing the list of private armies organized by politicians during the election period.

Verzosa said the list would be presented in today's joint security meeting of the PNP, the military and election officials in Camp Crame.

Gen. Victor Ibrado, chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), yesterday disclosed that the military was ready to ask for Malacañang help to "overwhelm" the Ampatuan clan, which had been considered the main suspect in the massacre.

Preliminary findings showed that out of the more than 1,500 high-powered firearms government troops had seized from the Ampatuans, 22 reached close to the AFP inventory, he said.

Of the more than one million rounds of ammunition recovered, about 9 percent came from the government, 70 percent from Arms Corporation of the Philippines, a private arms dealer, and others from unspecified source, Ibrado said.

Sen. Pocholo Pimentel yesterday said that the deployment of 81 agents of the National Bureau of Investigation and 300 policemen at the trial on Tuesday of Andal Ampatuan Jr., principal suspect in the massacre, at Camp Crame indicated the potential result of the clan.

"It's showing us and indicating to us the influence of the guns of Maguindanao is not only felt there but beyond," said Pimentel, a former MNLF chief of staff. With reports from Christine Avendaño and Nikko Dizon

Sulu politics heats up over armored vehicles

From page A1

Tan, who is seeking reelection, denied ownership of the two armored vehicles, saying the supposition was libelous. "There is no truth to it," he said.

"Why would I need armored vehicles in the first place when the province is under state of emergency," he said, referring to the declaration of martial law during the kidnapping of three Red Cross workers in March.

Atilano claimed that the armored vehicles were purchased through the help of retired police and military generals. But he refused to identify them.

The government, he said, should confiscate Tan's vehicles in line with President Macapagal-Arroyo's directive to dismantle all private armies in the country.

Fighting back, Tan urged the military and the Philippine National Police to investigate Atilano's dealings with the Ampatuans from whom huge caches of weapons had been seized following the massacre of 57 people in Maguindanao.

"The police and military, including the media, should investigate the handling of 200 firearms in Jolo town," he said.

Lindh belongs to Arthusen's congressional district.

"Ito ay isinilagay providing firearms sa mga Ampatuanes, as well as in the barangay officials in Lindh. In fact, there's a report that 100 high-powered firearms landed in his town to Lindh right after the Nov. 23 massacre," Tan said.

Lt. Gen. Jose Reyes Jr., Western Mindanao Command chief, said the military had not received any report of an arms landing in the town. "We will verify that provided we have strong basis," he said.

Reyes also said that Tan was not using any military armored vehicle. "Try checking with the PNP," he said.

QC jail move a security nightmare

From page A1

powerful Ampatuan clan and the primary suspect in the Nov. 23 massacre in Maguindanao of 57 people, 30 of them journalists, has been charged with 41 counts of murder.

His case is being heard by District Urb. Judge Jocelyn Solis-Reyes at the Quezon City Hall of Justice in Camp Crame. He has been held at the NBI jail since he was arrested on Nov. 26.

Citing the "special treatment" allegedly being afforded him, the relatives of the journalists killed in Maguindanao have asked the court to order his transfer to the Quezon City Jail.

But Puno said "security" should take precedence over "convenience," and that holding Ampatuan Jr. in the crowded Jail Management Unit (JMU) at the NBI would also put the lives of the other inmates at risk.

"That jail is more vulnerable to attacks than where he is now," Puno said, adding:

"We don't have enough manpower to control crowds and to prevent... serious attacks against the jail."

Bicutan 'OK'

Dewandaru also said there was still "no urgent necessity" for Ampatuan Jr.'s transfer because he remained the least accused among the almost 200 respondents in the massacre case.

The other members of the clan who are facing multiple murder charges at the August case of Ampatuan Jr.'s father, former Maguindanao Gov. Andal Ampatuan Sr., datucanmen Reginald Mindanao Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan, Acting Maguindanao Gov. Sajid Islam Ampatuan, and Shariff Aguak Mayor Suwar Ampatuan.

Asked what she thought was the appropriate venue of the trial and detention facility if state prosecutors found probable cause to charge the other respondents in the case, Dewandaru said: "Bicutan would be more OK."

"Bicutan" is Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig City, the headquarters of the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) and Southern Police District (SPD).

Dewandaru pointed out that the case involving the carnapping of Ala Ampatuan was "already being heard" in Bicutan.

She also took exception to the "perception" of Ampatuan Jr.'s lawyer Sigfrid Fortun during Tuesday's hearing that Ampatuan could not understand English or Filipino. (See story on Page A6.)

"If he doesn't understand Filipino or English, it's terrible for him," Dewandaru said. "He was practicing our honorifics in English."

Dewandaru said that when she went to Maguindanao to oversee the DOJ case build-up, she told Ampatuan Jr. that the nearest center in the place.

"Ito sad, 'Sec, ma'am," she said.

Best place

Pono likewise suggested that Ampatuan Jr. and the other respondents be taken to the SBMA.

"It's the best place for high-risk prisoners," he said. "The first many layers of security (there). Aside from jail guards, the 56,000 forces are around it, and there's a private armed security (there). Besides, it's a very [good] facilities."

To prevent a possible violent confrontation between the Ampatuans and the Mamo wars, Pono said the Ampatuans could occupy an empty building in the detention area.

He said the building once housed a rehabilitation center for youth offenders.

Pono said other measures

IN THE KNOW

Massacre suspect a high school dropout

CUEVARO CITY—THE PRIMARY suspect in the Nov. 23 Maguindanao massacre is said to have dropped out after somehow managing his freshman year in high school.

Nur-anger of the town of Datu Unay in Maguindanao, Andal Ampatuan Jr. last attended classes at a Catholic-run high school on Nov. 23, 1999, according to a source in the school.

Asked if Ampatuan Jr. was involved in any trouble before he dropped out, the source said there was none to his recollection.

"He had no disciplinary record while in school," the source added.

At the first hearing on Tuesday of the multiple-murder case filed against him, Ampatuan Jr.'s legal counsel said his client spoke only Maguindanaon and could understand nothing but fresh, main part

IN THE KNOW

Remembering 'Hello Garci'

EVEN BEFORE THE NOV. 23 MASSACRE, allegations of cheating, poll sabotage and election-related violence had besmirched the image of Maguindanao.

Maguindanao was one of the provinces mentioned in the "Hello Garci" tape scandal involving wiretapped conversations supposedly between President Macapagal-Arroyo and former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano on rigging votes in Mindanao in 2004. Both Ms Arroyo and Garcillano denied allegations of wiretapping.

During the 2004 presidential election, Ms Arroyo won most of the votes in Maguindanao. In one town, Sen el Sadik, she got a single vote.

In May 2007, presidential election supervisor Lintang Bedol appeared before the National Board of Canvassers and announced that the administration senatorial candidates (Team Unity) had scored a 12-0 sweep in Maguindanao.

Bedol also claimed that 19 other senatorial candidates—seven of them from the opposition—got more votes as reflected in the provincial tally. Then Commission on Elections (Comelec) Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. himself described the results as "statistically improbable."

The Maguindanao results were unusual since the tally would define the 12th spot in the Senate lineup. (Team Unity's Miguel Zubiri later claimed the spot, fielding out Gerardo Espina, Opposition's Aquilino Pimentel Jr.)

Then Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) spokesperson Eid Kabalu, citing field reports, said "there was no unusual numbers of elections in many parts of Maguindanao."

Kabalu quoted MILF members and supporters as saying that election materials did not even reach some polling precincts.

Other witnesses claimed, for example, who acted as a member of the board of election inspectors (BEI), accused local Comelec officials, police and the military of committing fraud.

The results led no elections actually took place in Maguindanao, claiming that colleagues were ordered to fill out the ballots on the eve of the voting.

In an affidavit, a 31-year-old man said he and his fellow BEI members were taken from the treasurer's office on May 14 and brought to a banana patch where they filled out ballots while armed men stood by.

Provincial administrator Nasser Sinsuat told the Team Unity convoy was a result of atrocities committed by Gov. Andal Ampatuan Sr., an ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo, with local officials. Unas said this was natural to get people to vote on a line under threat of extinction.

Four days after appointing before the board of canvassers, Bedol told reporters that the municipal certificates of canvass (CoCs) were stolen from the Comelec office in the provincial capital in Shariff Aguak, while he was in Shariff Kabunsuan.

In June 2007, two days before the Comelec office in Manila was to hear allegations of poll fraud, Maguindanao schools chief per supervisor Jesus Dimaluddung was shot dead. He was among those who helped expose alleged election irregularities in the province.

On Aug. 7, 2007, a Comelec resolution found Bedol guilty of indirect contempt. He was penalized with a six-month prison term at the Manila City Jail and a fine of P1,000. Bedol spent only one night at the Comelec's law department before he was released on a P15,000 bail.

A warrant for Bedol's arrest was issued on Oct. 22, 2007, on the strength of the Comelec ruling. On Oct. 30, 2007, police tried to serve the warrant at his residence in Cotabato City, but he was not there.

The warrant was subsequently returned to the Comelec. In December 2009, the Supreme Court upheld the jail term meted out on Bedol.

Bedol has yet to surface. —Compiled by Alma Moreda, Inquirer Research

Source: Inquirer archives

SCENE OF THE CRIME The Commission on Elections office in the compound of the Maguindanao provincial capital in Shariff Aguak has been ransacked, and authorities are surprised that this can happen despite a heavy guard composed of some 200 policemen and soldiers.

Comelec office ransacked

From page A1

the water dispenser and water kitchen utensils, but Orbase said some documents might be missing.

"We are still trying to find out what are the other missing articles, which might be of significant value to the coming polls," she said.

Senior Supt. Alex Linares, provincial police chief, said the Comelec had not reported the robbery to police authorities and was baffled that the robbers could easily enter the Comelec office because it was being heavily secured.

"We have our men and the military securing the perimeter, both inside and outside, and it is impossible that robbers were able to penetrate [the office]," Linares said.

At least 200 soldiers and policemen are deployed at the provincial capitol compound, which is also surrounded by a concrete fence. Employees must write their names at the gates before they can enter the compound and their offices.

Heavy troop deployment

The heavy troop deployment was prompted by the election-related massacre of 57 people, including 30 journalists, at Ampatuan town in Maguindanao last Nov. 23. Several top civilian officials, mostly members of the Ampatuan clan, were arrested.

A few days after the midterm takeover of the province on Dec. 3, lawmen seized election-related documents from a warehouse allegedly owned by the Ampatuan clan in Shariff Aguak. The documents, including voter's registration forms and voter's IDs, were dug up along with firearms and ammunition.

Orbase had confirmed that the recovered documents were authentic and were issued by the Comelec. She could not say why it ended up being buried at the warehouse.

Last Dec. 11, more votes IDs were found near the house of acting Maguindanao Gov. Esmid Ampatuan.

'Revelation'

The poll officer of Shariff Aguak at that time, Allan Olpoto, was to be recalled to explain why the election-related documents were taken out of the Comelec office. But he died on Dec. 11 of heatstroke while on an Islamic pilgrimage in Mecca.

The documents were moved to the Comelec provincial office pending investigation.

In a phone interview, Pimentel said it was possible that some people were "worried about the revelations of what really happened in the 2004 presidential elections, as well as in the 2007 elections."

For his part, Gov. Rudolfo Bianco said authorities should identify the people behind the latest break-in as it would appear that it was related to the massive cheating committed there in 2004 and 2007.

The robbery could have been committed by people "who may be compromised to whatever pieces of evidence that had been carted away," said Bianco. With a report from Christine O. Avendaño in Manila

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TO RELATIVES AND FRIENDS OF THE MANZANO FAMILY

AN INVITATION TO PRAYERS FOR A DOUBLE CELEBRATION

Today, January 7, is the 87th birthday of the late ROSARIO BARRIOS MANZANO, recipient of the Medal of Freedom from the United States government for meritorious services rendered to the United States from April 1942 to February 1945 during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines.

At great risk to her life, Rosario Manzano helped establish an intelligence network for the resistance movement and secretly supplied food, medicines, money, and passed messages to and from American and Filipino prisoners of war at Camp O'Donnell in Capas, Tarlac and at the POW Camp in Cabanatuan, Nueva Ecija.

January 5 was also the 89th birthday of her husband, the late ADRIAN HERNANDEZ MANZANO, who had served during that war as a Civilian Intelligence Agent of the Special Intelligence Party, SWPA (USA). He also served as courier between radio and intelligence installations in Manila and assisted the Intelligence Command as Technical Advisor and Consultant on Civil Affairs.

In commemoration of their parents' meaningful and fruitful lives, their children GIGI, EDU, MARI and RICKY would like to invite their relatives and friends to join them in prayer for this double celebration.

Across the NATION

Assistant Editor Tony Burgonia

Kin of freed kidnap victim pay ₱100,000 in 'board, lodging'

ZAMBOANGA CITY—SUSPECTED members of the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan freed on Tuesday the grandson of a former Zamboanga del Norte mayor, who was kidnapped about five months ago.

Donald Capili Jr., 30, was handed by a certain Mujib, nephew of Basilan Vice Gov Al Rashdeen Sakalahdel, from Barangay Kabit in Isabela town around 6:30 p.m.

Sakalahdel said he was told that Capili's family paid P100,000 in "board and lodging fee."

Teresa, Sakalahdel's aunt, said it appeared that Capili had not taken a bath for some time.

"His first request was to take a bath," she said.

After taking custody of Capili, Teresa said the Sakalahdel served dinner to the freed kidnap victim.

Capili, a grandson of former Liloy, Zamboanga del Norte Mayor Belfrin Uy, was kidnapped on Aug. 27 while tending the family-owned gasoline station in Barangay Bayluay in Liloy.

His captors, led by an Abu Sayyaf commander identified only as Abu Sayyaf members—had threatened to burn throughout his captivity.

Speaking in a mixture of English, Tagalog and Visayan, Capili said he learned to eat food—including jack fruit and bananas—which he had not eaten before during his 157 days in captivity.

"I don't eat those fruits, but during my captivity, that's all what we eat there. I learned to eat and appreciate those fruits," he said.

He described the place he was held in to be forested.

Capili said his captors had asked for a huge amount for his liberty.

"We are not rich so I didn't expect anyone to go to the extent of raising some amount for my release," he said. *Jobo Alpasa, Inquirer Mindanao*

Palawan town loses IRA in land deal

By Rodempto O. Anda
Inquirer Southern Luzon

PUERTO PRINCESA City—The noose is tightening around Coron after a firm reneged on a deal that forced the tourist town to absorb a P15-million debt used by the firm to develop a piece of land there as a hotel resort.

The firm, Coron officials said, backed off from an ammendment to amortize the P15-million loan from Land Bank of the Philippines for the initial site development of Coron Getaway Hotel.

The officials told the Inquirer that an investment group, led by Boracay-based investor Steve Tajanlangit, failed to pay the town's bank debt as required under an agreement giving Tajanlangit's firm a 25-year lease on the land.

As a result, the Landbank collected from the town's internal revenue allotment in December. Landbank is the official government depository bank.

"Landbank automatically deducted the quarterly payment due [on the loan] from our IRA," said Councilor Jim Ho.

"In fact we were not able to fully pay the bonuses of government employees last December because we ran out of funds," said Fe, who also sits as board member.

One-sided deal

The agreement is currently being questioned by several local officials led by Vice Mayor Pearl Peñasco, who claimed that Mayor Mario Reyes had an underthe-table deal with the agreement with Tajanlangit's group.

"They just called among themselves," Peñasco said in text the Inquirer.

The Inquirer tried to request for a copy of the agreement from the mayor's office, but its staff said it was not available.

A source, however, showed a non-notarized copy signed by Reyes and Tajanlangit, who represented a group called Taytay sa Kauswagan Inc. (TSKI), a group based in Iloilo City.

The agreement allows TSKI to operate the hotel for 25 years, renewable for another 25 years. In exchange, the firm was to pay P5 million on time in cash and assume the town's P15 million debt from Landbank, which was used to reclaim portion of Coron and build the structure for the hotel.

Wrong party?

Peter Montellano, an official of TSKI, confirmed that the group had an agreement with the town but was seeking amendments to it.

"We are trying to rectify that," Montellano said. He said the agreement should be between the municipality and Coron Getaway Development Corp. (CGDC).

Montellano said TSKI had paid quarterly amortization to the Landbank for the town's loan. "So far as I know, we have already paid the last quarter," he said.

Some town officials, however, said the deal favored Tajanlangit's group, TSKI.

Officials said the group had to pay only P3 million one time but would take control of a prime piece of property for at least 50 years.

"Unfortunately, we were really had a chance to deliberate on this in the municipal council," Councilor Patrick Matta said.

FIRST SUNRISE The calm waters of Davao Gulf are kissed by the rays of the first sunrise of 2010.

Prosecutors ask Comelec for guns, not guards

DAVAO CITY—CITING threats to their lives, prosecutors from Dinagat-sian have asked the Commission on Elections (Comelec) to let them carry firearms during the election period.

In a letter to the Comelec regional director, Provincial Prosecutor Segundino Severo said prosecutors are appointed members of boards of election canvassers, and their tasks entail additional security concerns.

Rudy Rabelas, Pinagkaisahan election supervisor, endorsed the letter, saying he knew of the danger that prosecutors face as they handle election-related cases.

Comelec Resolution No. 8716, issued on Dec. 16 last year, provides the list of people authorized to "bear, carry and transport firearms and other deadly weapons" during the election period. The list, however, did not include members of the Department of Justice's National Prosecution Service, unlike in previous elections.

"Prosecutors all over the country are always at risk due to the nature of their jobs. To [use them from carrying ... their licensed firearms would prevent them from defending themselves from [people] who intend to harm or permanently silence them," Severo said.

He cited as example the shooting of Prosecutor Elegio Tito Ortiz in August 2006, reportedly by people he was prosecuting.

"Several other prosecutors received threats ... [related] to their work," said Severo.

He said prosecutors do not want to further burden the police and the military by asking for security aides as they can defend themselves if properly armed.

"The threat to prosecutors' lives is very real," Prosecutor Edmundo Misanta said. *Felicia Sarmiento, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

GMA's Iloilo visit turns into ally's pep rally

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's hotel visit here on Tuesday became a show of force of her local allies running for election posts.

Some 500 supporters of Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Raul Gonzalez and his son and namesake, Iloilo Rep. Raul Gonzalez Jr., welcomed the President on Monday evening during an inspection of a flyover project along General Luna Street.

Their supporters, mostly wearing red shirts emblazoned with the name of the Gonzalezes, were joined by candidates for city councilor running under the slate of Secretary Gonzalez.

The elder Gonzalez is running for mayor against Vice Mayor Jed Patrick Mabilog and Presidential Adviser on Water Larry Jamora, while his son is running for re-election against their former ally, Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas.

Treñas, who broke away from the administration and joined the Nacionalista Party, said he was surprised with the mostly pro-Gonzalez crowd.

"I was told that this was going to be a hotel big fan it's okay, it's part of the game," the mayor said.

STUDENTS walk past a streamer with welcome greetings and the face of President Macapagal-Arroyo in Iloilo City. Many waited for at least four hours for the President to arrive.

Supporters of Gonzalez waited for at least four hours for the President to arrive.

The President came at around 6:30 p.m. and left 15 minutes later after she was given a briefing on the 282-meter Iloilo Esplanade flyover project under the President's Bridge Program.

The P580.5-million project, which started on Dec. 22, is scheduled for completion on June this year and is aimed at decongesting a main thoroughfare of the city.

As the crowd noticed the President, some of them chanted the name of Gonzalez as the President boarded a shuttle bus that took her away to the Iloilo airport.

Gonzalez said elections in the city have traditionally been decided by the strength of his group, claiming he has the support of at least 156 of the 180 barangay captains in the city. The city has around 242,000 voters.

NEWSBRIEFS

LEGAZPI CITY

Ex-policeman running for councilor slain

AN (UNIDENTIFIED) GUNMAN SHOT dead a retired policeman on Saturday in Daraga-an, some 20 kilometers south of Tabaco City, police said yesterday.

John Espallon, 48, former senior police officer 1, suffered seven gunshot wounds and died in a hospital.

Police said the gunmen used a .45-cal. pistol.

Espallon was running for councilor of Daraga-an and reportedly topped local surveys.

He was former member of the 509th Police Provincial Mobile Group of Sorsogon. Police said politics could be the motive for the killing. *Rey Kimod, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

CAMP VICENTE LIM

Cops say they foiled plan to bomb court

POLICE said they foiled an attempt to blow up the regional trial court in Sta. Cruz, Laguna.

Supt. Marvin Garry Sta. Cruz police chief, said an improvised explosive device was found inside the court office yesterday.

A cell phone served as a trigger device, but Sara said the bomb failed to explode because it was packed too tightly that "oxygen could not penetrate."

Sara said security guards saw smoke coming from the office at past 2 a.m. They found the bomb and threw it out.

Sara said there were no special cases being heard in the court and "it was just like any ordinary day here." *Marlene Cinco, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

LUCENA CITY

Solon in NY dinner plays Santa in Quezon

THE LAMBABOY who claimed he paid for the presidential entourage's $15,000 dinner in New York last year played Santa Claus in a celebration of 6,000 children in his hometown in Unisan, Quezon on Sunday.

Rep. Danilo Suarez Lukso-Kampi-GMO, told newsmen who covered the event that the event was not politics involved in the party.

Suarez, who is seeking his third term in Congress, led the distribution of crispy PGO bills, spoles, pave packs, cooked spaghetti and hotdogs to the children gathered inside the covered basketball court near the Unisan town hall.

The children hooted and rushed to Suarez's staffers before climbing the stage to receive gifts from the lawmaker.

Macaela Villanueva, a health worker from General Luna, said the village health workers distributed slots to 30 barangays. *Dolly T. Abalos Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

BACOLOD CITY

Revelry injuries up in Eastern Visayas

THE NUMBER of firecracker-related injuries in Eastern Visayas rose by 38 percent, the Department of Health (DOH)'s regional office reported.

DOH said contrary to earlier projections that the number of cases would decline, firecracker-related injuries in 38 in 2009 from 26 in 2008.

Most victims were male children who suffered minor injuries, said Dora Corro, DOH regional assistant secretary.

Government-run hospitals in the region were under "intensive surveillance." *Joey Galvez, Inquirer Visayas*

INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Julie Jan Baraquel
Bureau Chief Florante G. Solmerano

Youths seek violence-free Cavite polls

By Marikar Cinco
Trece Martires City

WANTING TO CHANGE A PERVASIVE HISTORY of political dynasties and rampant vote-buying in a province that is among those tagged as an election "hot spot," a group of students and first-time voters in Cavite believes that education may be the key to a clean and fair national elections in May.

"The campaign is for voters' education (especially) for the youth on how to participate in the automated elections and how to exercise our rights candidates to vote," said Atizle Sarile, campaign organizer and chair of the Communication Arts Department of De La Salle University-Dasmariñas (DLSU-D).

The group launched the Bike Kabisyon Movement for Clean Elections in the provincial capital in Trece Martires City in Sonora last, to raise the the first day of filing of candidacy for the 2010 polls.

Sarile said the campaign would target 700,000 young voters in the province to register as automated election volunteers. They are to conduct mail votes and school seminars up to the last week before the May polls, in which the personalities of national and local candidates will be discussed.

The movement now has 1,000 volunteers, she said.

Vote-rich province

Cavite is a vote-rich province, with around 1.5 million registered voters. Sarile said the profile made it all the more necessary for the group to initiate the movement, about 70 percent of the voters are also transients from other provinces, she added.

Sarile, a long-time member of the Board of Election Inspectors, said she had witnessed the embedded vote-buying and political violence during past elections in Cavite. As one time, she said, she had to run around and carry a ballot box herself to protect the ballots.

"We now want to show that Cavite is no longer as such. That is where we want to start change," she said.

The campaign started as a public relations advertisement of the DLSU-D academic educational fair in the Pulilla Bukawe factory of the Philippine (PEZP) Grand Prix in September. It was adopted by the provincial government as baseline model in forming the youth movement for the 2010 elections.

Johanna Abdullilas, 19, president of the PEZP chapter in Dasmariñas, said the group wanted such early senses confirm (before casting) our votes," she said.

Computerized polls

She said the movement would also help voters in using the computerized polling machines.

Sarile said most of the first-time voters "don't even know what to bring at the precinct."

The DLSU-D has tied up with the Ayuntamiento of the Philippines University Centro Campus, its Dominic College of Asia and other colleges and universities in the province. The movement, however, is also open to out-of-school youths.

"(And) it does not end after the elections," said Sarile. It aims to develop as a youth network that will also carry environment and other social causes.

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'Krusada' star finds new role in elections

By Marikar Cinco
Rosario, Cavite

KRUSADA' (CRUsade) is not another hostage-taking action-packed film.

It shows media stints clips of that 10-hour hostage drama involving 26 schoolchildren inside a bus, of a prisoners crashing into a congressional session and of hunger strikers against a perceived vice cartel—all orchestrated by real-life protagonist Armando "Jun" Durat, 39.

"Krusada" is a full-length documentary about Durat's life story that was launched on Dec. 19 during the inauguration of his construction materials outlet at the Cavite Economic Zone (CEZ) in Rosario in southern Cavite.

Copies of the film were distributed to raise funds for food and gifts for the children of the Mustasa Bayanis Center, which Durat is also running in a slum area in Manila, for their Christmas party.

"If they (donors) could give as much as P150,000 for the CD, then that's good. If they have more, we could give it for free," he added.

A total of P38,000 was collected from Durat's supporters in just one day.

Eye-opener

The film's director, Wanda "Tess" Nuñales, 66, said he had never known Durat until he heard of him taking children as hostages.

In 2003, Durat held hostage 26 day-care children in a bus for 10 hours as he called on the government to provide free education.

"But it was different. Imagine, the hostages were even eating and playing inside the bus! And here comes these star-an-runner, salute! This man must really be something else," Nuñales said.

In 1989, Durat, who was hired as a contractor of the San Roque Church in Manila, shot rosary priests as hostages in protest of an alleged malversation of the church funds. In 1995, he chained himself to an old church belfry for the same issue.

In the mid-'90s, Durat went on a series of hunger strikes against Chinese businessmen involved in the shabu cartel in Barrio Ilaya. He was briefly detained in 1998 after instigating a congressional session to protest the high prices of rice.

Durat also returned P1.2 million to the Bureau of Internal Revenue, which, according to the film, was "returned (forcing)" from some Korean businessmen in the CEZ.

In the film, Durat was described as the modern-day Don Quijote de la Mancha.

Posadas said he had followed the man's "scientific crusade" since then.

"He continued his fight against corruption even while inside the jail. He even had a tattoo on his chest that says, 'Be kind to prisoners,'" the director said.

While directing the film, Posadas remembered how people would regularly visit him to his cell, asking for help from the philanthropist.

But beyond extolling a story, he believed the film is "an eye-opener" to the social realities, hoping to inspire people.

45-day campaign

Durat said his crusade did not end in the 2007 hostage-taking or with his story recorded on reel. He shared his plans of embarking on another "crusade" as election nears.

He said he had his own 45-day campaign that he would stage simultaneously with the 2010 election campaign period.

"I have my truck here and I plan to go around the country to sit for no 1 on, to bring my message to the people," he said. "Krusada" will be shown during the events, he said.

Durat boasted of organizing one million supporters to Lapu (Lapulle, Pulilap na Bayan Pilipinas), a group tied to be forming as a poll watchdog.

His "campaign," however, will be different from that of traditional politicians.

"We need people to learn how to choose and vote wisely, fight against (election) fraud," he said, lastly, for them to be on guard against those whom they have voted for even after the elections," he said.

Durat, in one of his stints captured in "Krusada," likened politicians to a needle.

"You see its light very bright as they campaign for votes. They will even put this for now you, for you to feel their wounds. But after the elections, whether they win or lose, they will put the fire out and light it up again only when the next election comes," he said.

"KRUSADA," a full-length documentary of the 10-hour hostage drama involving 26 schoolchildren.

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OPINION

Choosing career

EDITORIAL

THE RECENT SERIES OF POSTINGS OF CAREER professionals to high level offices, to replace officials going into retirement or entering electoral politics, is both necessary and welcome. Would that President Macapagal-Arroyo make more such appointments.

The President's designations of Undersecretary Rhoda Quinto as Line Agency's successor as secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources is one such appointment. Quinto has served as operations undersecretary since September 2007; this background will enable her to move his admittedly basic objective of continuing Atienza's programs, including dismantling illegal fish pens in Laguna de Bay and implementing the landmark Supreme Court ruling on the rehabilitation of Manila Bay. (His decision to form a community of "environment resource multipliers" among DENR personnel should also be seen in this light.)

With only four months before the elections, and less than six months before the constitutionally mandated transfer of presidential power, the national interest requires "continuity" appointments: non-controversial replacements, by dedicated civil-service professionals, of every officials who do not need any lengthy transition period and are ready to work from the first day of an abbreviated term.

The three most recent appointments to the Supreme Court have also been non-controversial. The President's choice of the second most senior member of the Court of Appeals, Justice Jose Mendoza, to succeed Associate Justice Minita Chico-Nazario on the Supreme Court seems like a sound decision, based as it is principally on seniority.

Like Associate Justice Mendoza, the two appointees who preceded him to the Supreme Court are veterans of the judiciary: Martin Villarama was a highly esteemed justice of the Court of Appeals when he was named to replace Justice Consuelo Ynares-Santiago last November; Jose Perez was court administrator when he was appointed, only two weeks before Mendoza, to succeed Justice Leonardo-Quisumbing.

We realize that, with Mendoza's appointment, President Arroyo has named all but one of the Court's 15 magistrates. And even the lone holdout, Chief Justice Reynato Puno, was appointed by President Arroyo to his present post. (Puno was named to the Supreme Court in 1993 by President Fidel Ramos.)

Given this record, matched only by the longer-serving Ferdinand Marcos, Arroyo critics might say any new appointments does not really matter: Ms Arroyo controls the Court's majority any which way. They would be wrong. First, because the appointment to the Court of a genuine legal scholar, a reluctance even to other justices, can shape jurisprudence in ways an innumbent president cannot predict. And second, because our experience tells us that not all appointees see themselves as forever bound by loyalty to their appointing power: Marcos appointed Claudio Teehankee, and President Arroyo's first nominee was Antonio Carpio, now the senior associate justice and in the last few years an eloquent critic of administration policy (or the lack of it).

At any rate, even if the recent appointees to the Court do not turn out to be a modern Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. or a latter-day Cecilia Muñoz-Palma, they will serve the ends of justice if they meet the promise of competence and integrity their appointment holds. The last thing the Court needs is a flagrantly partisan, highly controversial appointment.

Many more offices will become vacant, especially in the Executive Branch, as other officials running for elective office reach the same, self-inflicting conclusion as Atienza's. The Court ruling allowing public officials to remain in office even after filing certificates of candidacy is not a *pure* blessing. Atienza received more votes earlier than required because his position well nor help him in his campaign for mayor of Manila. So with the other Cabinet members seeking elective office. This means the President will have the opportunity to appoint many more of the right career officials. Will she make the most of it?

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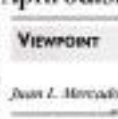
Aphrodisiac issue

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado



JUST BEFORE THEIR TRIAL STARTED, thugs that the self-heeled Ampatuans were alleged "PR" treatment in detention erupted. "The rich are unlike the poor," Imelda Marcos sang out-of-tune. "They have more money."

Well, Shrek's Donkey? Medioff squeaked more lyric that the Ampatuans failed by 156 votes, Medioff ain't humbled with his gloves. Such comments exacerbate the fury of Maguindanao massacre victim relatives.

The hunt is on. Judge Jocelyn Solis-Reyes, the trial judge, makes a snarl when she's also "begged off." This does not rate the back burner, for now, plunder of Internal Revenue Allotments (IRA) and other funds in Maguindanao...

"Most politicians in the area consider IRA as their own personal funds, a reward for political exercises," North Cotabato Vice Gov. Manny Pinol wrote to the heavens. "Mister of the IRA ... is public knowledge."

That's news to Datumbaruan Bienvenida Gutierrez. She has convened a constitutional graft-busting body into a hustler for her province's treasury. Three Gutierrezes and others remain at-g, the Ampatuans.

NEDA Cotabato match the Ampatuan's 24 memorex with their statements of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worths' don't hold your breath. The Ampatuans gave her modest 185,938 votes over Fernandez's 76,961.

She sat on her hands in other cases linked to Maka-yang, the Philippine Human Development Report's (PHDR) 2009 says. There included all the 52 billion Mega-Pacific election computer scam and Jocelyn Bolante's P726 million Jueteng scandal. An hostile authoritarian is symbol of a "soft state."

IRAs are the local governments' share in taxes collected. A year ago, IRAs exceeded P166 billion. They now account for 67 centavos out of every local tax peso, says the Commission on Audit. It was all remiss a decade earlier.

IRAs did equal decent townhalls. They also enabled poverty-shaped provinces, like Ifalu and Basilan, to avoid water. Out of every ten pesos, 29 centavos for the 2010 National Development Fund went to address "unmet human needs": potable water, sanitation, preventive health care, malnutrition, etc.

IRAs alone aren't ever our massive poverty, an initial outline. But wisely used, they can trigger growth. They also make rising expectations.

Family dynasties, however, bankrolled just about everything with IRAs, from bonanza and basta dances to motorcycles. The Catholic Bishops' social action Secretariat flayed IRA-funded "observation trips," i.e., junkets.

In private industry, those who spend three pesos on wages to deliver a peso worth of services or products are fired. But once a five-year period, 1/5 is spent, on average, 74 centavos out of every tax peso for salaries, the CDA found. Personnel service expenditures "outstrips their officially reported," the World Bank and Asian Development Bank added.

Maguindanao closed in 2005 a P555 million deficit. That grew to P621 million a year later, according to the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism.

How did the dumpsiters use their IRAs? Almost nothing went for health. The National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) reports that the maternal mortality burden in Maguindanao stagnated at 163 from 2000 to 2006. Neither did the province add a single school since 2001.

PHDR 2009 found that 44 out of 100 Maguindanao residents were "un-read nor write." In contrast, only four out of every 100 Batanguenos, at least those with electricity, easily communicated skills. Nine do in Occidental Mindoro.

Did this bankroll the purchase of those guns unearthed in suspicious caches? Not Dentinez pay for backhoe operators? Yes? Does about Arroyo's kudos for this governor's of this and Basta of 38.59 retailers?

Leaving asset beyond IRAs. In 2008, the CDA complained it could "not ascertain validity of provincial government's claim it had P 127 million deposited in banks." Equally murky were reports of properties and assets worth P146 million.

Auditors in 2007 also couldn't confirm that Maguindanao had P4.07 million in banks or P5.73 million in properties. You can bet your last peso the 2009 report will reveal the same patterns.

Unavailable bank accounts, and questionable property and equipment utilities, erupt up to zero after years. Sultan Sinsuat Abdullah Sangki, Datu Datu Datu Indil Ampatuan, etc.

LCEs should match IRAs with counterparts, the UN suggests. "Providing equity to grass" will worsen the chasm into holes. Link IRAs to loans to provide "performance criteria" in local tax collection, the Asian Development Bank suggests. "No action, no dole-outs."

Like aphrodisiacs, IRA dolees are habit-forming. Thus, 16 cities would drop into the IRA pot, not by improved tax collection. Instead, they'd trek to the through the backdoor: A Supreme Court "final decision" that ruled the 16 were not qualified—only to be overturned when the Court declared that final is not final.

LCEs that curb malnutrition, provide safe water, improve health services, expand basic education and cut the 29 centavos wasted of a staggering P1.21 billion. Apply the anti-graft law by prohibiting officials from dipping into IRA funds.

Did we send a Maguindanao taxmaxx to drive them home home?

(Email: jmercado@gmail.com)

Happiness

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THE GUY JUST WON'T LET GO. "THE HOT not be on our side," says Imperio Sagrado heroically. "But we will do it, all the pending and special committees, led by the committee on rules, are up to their respective mandates."

"If" is changing the Charter.

Well, time is the last thing they should worry about. Sanity is first. There is absolutely no reason to take up Charter change at this time. That can always be left to the next government. Or, as I've always argued, that can always be left in the time when we can first demonstrate a capacity to obey the law the Charter simply being its highest expression. What's the point of changing a Charter we don't bother to follow anyway?

In fact, there's only one thing Congress should be doing right now, and time is money against it. It's never too late to do the right thing. Congress should learn itself with all the desperation of the damned, or of time running out, either to impeach Gloria Macapagal Arroyo or to ask her to go on indefinite leave, effective immediately. Or both.

I don't know that the second fully within the bounds of law, such as the courts of this country know it, but I do know it falls within the bounds of morality. Or forget morality, of common sense, which is really the fundamental underpinning of any basic contention or argument. The point is to compel GMA by any moral means necessary to use be three in this crucial time in the life of the country. That is order and reason.

Without GMA there, we can cry the Ampatuan family and especially its two sons, that is as heinous crimes will not happen under the auspices of someone for whom the words fair and square, or any other word, or concept, or what of an idea remotely suggesting honesty are temporally allied with as felicitously as with Ugly Rhoda. Of course, the Mars being plea-negotiated haunting on a pre- hands cleared tightly, her face furrowed by intense worship and supplication. We just don't know to whom all that is addressed.

At the very least, that is because then God will not happen under the auspices of someone who won't elected, or whose legitimacy was sealed by an act that would have been deemed treason in any other country, which was cheating with an election official to steal the vote. Indeed, who has aided and abetted, if not created, warlords like the Ampatuans for their inordinate use in manufacturing votes. Will indeed, in an utter perversion of decency, who has given the Comelec, the one institution in this country tasked with thwarting clean elections, least to remove real scoundrels from their office after they have won. Thus far, its second director has tried to steal Ed Peñaflor, Conte Tadeco and Jesse Robredo, the latter two having the distinction not just of winning the elections but of winning the Bantay Maguayan Awards for governance.

Without GMA there, we can finally have some peace. At the very least we can be sure we will not have a failure of elections, the product curiously of the Comelec handling, deliberately or not, the distribution of ballots, the delivery of the machines, the overall conduct of elections (to date, there has been no attempt to subvert the public on nomination). Nor is there a chance of a failure of elections if the Smartmatic machines pull a cabbit or a Teodoro out of the hat. I've never been convinced that cheating will not happen if Neptune Aquino's load in the canvass begins to look incontrovertible. What if the point precisely is to draw attention to the need to embarrass him the public to justify military action?

At the very most, without GMA there, the sun will come out in the sky, the birds will sing in the trees, and the people will dance in the streets. Without GMA there, people, juntos, lucky pocos and the inspirations, will stop dying of cancer, the kami will walk, the dead will hear, the blind will see, and only those who can carry a tune will be allowed to sing in a karaoke. Without GMA there, the earth and sea and air will flourish and flow and murmur words of love, milk and honey will inundate the land to the last drop, and hope and generosity will spring from people's hearts like oil spring out from the bowels of the earth.

Without GMA there, we will have a truly happy new year.

Voters should shade entire space

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cassayan

RECENTLY, THE INQUIRER CITED REPORTS about the alleged VIP treatment given to Arroyo and members now detained in the PNP-CIDG camp in Crodalia. It cited how they enjoyed catered food, air-conditioning and other lifestyle trappings, plus the use of access privileges denied to other detainees and inmates. How to keep VIP detainees from being pampered has bugged prison czars in times past. Recall how they tried tighter jeans law; Gregorio Honasan was ordered to demand aboard a ship en route to Manila that due to the camaraderie developed over the contagious feasting and revelry aboard Senator Zaldy Ampatuan Sr., Ruben Ampatuan brought pampering to new heights.

The Inquirer's exposé on Crodalia camp prompted the government to probe the allegations, but even more disturbing are reports that chief detainees have resorted to coercing or bribing witnesses to retract their statements. If true, they should weaken the government's case against the perpetrators of the massacre. This should also be investigated.

* * *

So much inciting went around about the recent Malacañang "Kapihan" with Philippines' Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco's bet pretending VP cyclist Manfrex Bolbol to withdraw from the recent 23th Southeast Asian Games in Laos. Bolbol was the only Filipino cyclist who competed in the recent Asian Continental Cycling Federation to compete in Laos, but because she does not belong to the association aligned with Cojuangco, she was asked to withdraw from the Games. The spirited word Cojuangco's outspoken brings up the "other side" of the Aquino legacy and ethos, and rubbed on his mother, Tarlac's Aquinos, is held him to account, lest his own "noble" image be tarred.

Cojuangco's appointment as commissioner nemesis of the dynastic "Ramos clan, Inc." whose machinations led Jun Cinco Bores, who had gathered a million signatures to nominate Cory Aquino to run against Marcos, to desperately cry in Malacañang the "highwaymen" among her relatives raid-was into her administration. Cojuangco has constructed as a key power-broker for Noynoy and have the unreliable baseline this

issue, as well as that of Hacienda Luisita, which his cousin has run off these years, will be crucial.

* * *

Hence last to the reports about Smoke in fighting among the various groups supporting Noynoy, which stems from, among other things, the attempts of Cojuangco's group to recruit traditional politicians, which is being opposed by Liberal leaders. Legarda "Today there are said to be at least five groups formally fighting for dominance in that camp: the Cojuangcos, the Aquinos led by mom-in-law Paul Aquino and former Rep. Butz Aquino, the Dilon-Roxas faction, the Hyatt 10 group that overtook suite the Black & White Restaurant, and still ministry leaders who resisted the million signatures campaign for Noynoy. The fierce in fighting appear really-arisen from the perception that the candidate is more and "charisma" on leadership, in contrast to Manny Villar or Gilbert Teodoro who appear to be in full command of their people.

Political historians saw the in-fighting for dominance during the Cory era when various power groups, including the civil-peace military chief, Cory families in the Tarlac and the "Council of Twos," sought to call the presidents' politician in various directions. But the unofficial leader of countering Thereby candidate from that Noynoy could be similar to what happened during the Cory era when various leadership spots in his mother's group, and some of his supporters are known for their proclivities to have their leader high and dry as soon as power, in part of their own agenda.

* * *

The political opposition to President Macapagal-Arroyo seems to be spooking the electorate with failures of automated elections, her alleged schemes to stay in power by running for speaker, or her using the -ism-ism to become prime minister. I shudder about how this tiny woman can frighten the opposition. This is not to say an assigned fault to the future, the electronic poll bets to replace our safe and real ones from more predictable propaganda. One real danger lies in a tiny detail in our automated elections, as revealed by Comelec Commissioner Rene Sarmiento: unless Comelec engineers and experts in our ballot program some time ago, in the ballots to be used in the coming elections, voters don't have to write the names of their candidates anymore, but simply shade the oblong space before their chosen candidates. Sarmiento revealed that to shade the entire space fully or the machines won't read it. In other words, cheating may be minimized but the prospect of invalidation of votes is huge. I think it is time that the Comelec has to conduct information campaigns on the barangay level and explain the voting procedure by means of outsized sample ballots, so that voters won't be disenfranchised.

* * *

A quick count will be held by my elementary and high school alma mater, the old Holy Ghost College on Mendiola, now College of the Holy Spirit, this Sunday, Jan. 10, 2010, at 6 p.m. at its main hall. The new Holy Ghost Fathers and Brothers (HGFB-2012), a hundred years of missionary service of the Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit established today in St. Peter Hungarobos. The concert will feature children of Filipino overseas workers, including Tess Fernandez, accompanied by Leandro de Leon Gregorio, pianist Ingrid Sala Sarmiento, flutist Ray Ison and Jonathan Co, who will be Ingrid's guest in her celebration of Rachmaninoff's "Concerto in C Minor." Making its "debut" as a concert in the HGCs hundred year old Germany concert grand piano, which as piano professor Fr. Guadalupe de Leon relates, had been badly battered by wounds. Today it has been fully restored to its beautiful tones, thanks to the labor of love of expert technician Ignacio "Igie" Suarez and his efficient coworkers, as well as the alumnae and their friends who helped raise the funds. Congratulations.

The subject is women's urinals

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

ALBERT EINSTEIN AND AMONG 20 HEROES OF WOMEN among those quoted in a brother-in-women's urinals delivered at the British Toilet Association by one Dale Levitman. I found the piece in the Internet while trying to learn something about women's urinals. The piece is serious but I could make you laugh if you use your imagination less.

I forgive with acquire from Einstein. "Imagination is more important than knowledge." And from the irrepressible Dale, "If you women must seeing like people, then will be accused of acting like men."

After pointing up those last pink enclosures for men's urinals on Ilocos Manila's sidewalks, the Inquirer has been receiving letters from readers I'm planning to have women's urinals as well. The franchise of former MMDA chair Bayani Fernando knew a few presidential candidates, this men's urinals which have been around for a couple of years now and which are clean and operational when they were being planned.

Will they last? Will they be vandalized? Who will maintain the units? Will they be a source of pollution? Why but pink? And to thrift and waste.

Here's what I've been learning: Men will not like that pink may green. What shade of green is any body's guess: leaf, lime, frik, apple, thyroxine(?).

The men's urinals were supposed to be the answer to the problem of men relieving themselves from doing their thing on posts, walls, trees, bushes, sides of vehicles, garbage piles, etc. But despite these urinals, pissed signs ("Bawal umihi dito, by order"), "Ang daing ang umihi sa pader" I need a reward,"?!), a kind of graffiti and operations when they were being planned.

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Drivers usually go to gas stations to relieve themselves. I think the men's urinals are used mainly by male pedestrians, sidewalk vendors and watchmen. Some brave have been raised against these urinators: the foul-odor, the possible pollution of the ground water, the problem with drainage, etc.

And now, women's urinals! The source of the news stories are the fears to change of running

Metro Manila. They sound like they are heaven's gift to the women of this metropolis. Not that I'm against these structures. The question is: How they solved the women? What shape or form will these women's urinals have? How they sound. Will the female urinators feel comfortable?

One blogger writes of her experience in the US: "Lately I've been running into urinals in women's restrooms. I have tried using them (while wearing pants and skirts), but the only way I can figure out how would work is if the women's urinals are not wearing any underwear. Who invented the internal contraptions, how are they intended to work, and why are they cropping up more and more?"

Women's urinals, by the way, are not like your regular flush toilet at home. Here was someone's answer which explains why women's urinals are that way: "They were introduced into the US from Europe in the early '20s (along with the bidet...), and were intended for use by women who did not want their delicate flesh coming into contact with pubby public toilet seats. They came in both floor- and wall-mounted models, the latter looking very much like their male counterparts."

The writer goes on to describe the women's urinal as something with a protruding narrow funnel that the user, while facing the wall, was expected to straddle (like straddling a horse) leaving the lowered flap open to aim the stream of piss, whose upon the women could then do her thing. Can you picture that?

"One problem," she blogger writes, "may have been that women's underwear manufacturers never managed to come up with an equivalent to the male underpant which is laden with useful apertures that facilitate the use of urinals."

That kind of women's urinal, as described, should be a thing of the past because more women use wear pants like the men but have a different anatomical plumbing. But in Germany you can see "women's urinals" (Damenurinale). It appears that women can do it standing. "That a woman can urinate standing is clear and the more I investigate this, the more women indicate that it is not a problem. It is possible and it is natural to do. The confusion once again points to the need to dispel cultural prejudice and create practical suggestions for women to offer them the ability to learn a natural and environmentally friendly method. This is a question of social justice, hygiene, comfort and common sense."

Are you not laughing yet? The only women I have seen urinating while standing were old rural women in patadyong and who have no panties on.

I remember a rugged bus trip to the Cordillera hinterlands many years ago. A friend and I were fussing about where to relieve ourselves. As the path-speaking Cordillera woman who is only a head taller than I am at the time, she simply said, "Just squat down in the bus." Where will those women's urinals be placed? Will they hang signs like, "Bawal umihidoon"? Will there be toilet-attendants? Ask the women.

Men (it is the hall of laughter for you) bmd@hotmail.com/mdoyo@gmail.com

Signs of insanity

THIS IS A HUMANOID EVIDENCE OF "DIMINISHED SANITY." The doctor chuckled as he held my hand. I laughed along with him, although he was referring to my near temporary insanity.

I was in the clinic that day for a routine check-up, and the doctor had noticed the tiny veins, already greenish with age, on the fleshy part of my right hand, between my thumb and index finger.

I didn't want to bother to share him, however, another evidence just above my left breast, in the form of a tribal tat with 33 rays that symbolized something I signed, I used to tuo during my college years. Half-embossing in the clinic would have confirmed his initial suspicion about the state of my mind.

YOUNG BLOOD

Michael T. Quiocho

The check-up went on, and before the doctor shone light down my ear canal to check if I had perforated my eardrum from listening to too much rock-and-roll, he rub-asked me the four piercings done on my left earlobe and tak-taked some more over the five small holes on my right ear. The good doctor, probably with more as much on his skin to show that his only vice was coffee, nodded and said that multiple earpiercings, along with tattoos, were out of fashion sora ago.

I agreed with the doctor on that fact. But I held my tongue on the real reason I have the markings on my skin; for me they are not there for the sake of being fashionable.

By the time the check-up was over, instructions in hand, which advised me to come back in a year when I was young, impressionable, and, alright, temporarily insane.

It is now a little over 16 years to the day I got my first tattoo. A guy called Rich (or was it Andi?) was responsible for etching that permanent mark on my right hand. The tool he had was primitive: a stub of pencil on which the guy were first sewing needles. He inked pencil lead for color. It is called Happy Homer (called Sapphire also) and he'd place by a piece of thread. For ink, he had a beer bottle cap full of blackie, the kind used to refill drafting pens.

Being a lefty, I drew a squiggle on my right hand. The squiggle represented the personal emblem I would carry for eternity.

I remembered the date of the afternoon we as I waited, nervous yet excited, for Andi/Rich to draw first blood. I smoked myself to withstand the pain, to love to tell about the experience.

When people ask me now if it was painful to have a tattoo done, I unhesitatingly say yes. It was painful. I have since repeatedly plunged needles in the skin is not exactly natural. It's not exactly natural. It was not something one would wish to do all too often. Also, Andi/Rich was nervous. He trained a few lines and made some crooked ones to compensate for the ones he missed. But I had to admire his tenacity; his steady determination to finish the design. I decided for him much up his urban legend in the artistic department. It seems have never let an amateur do an ink job. Tattooers come at a price for the sort of art resembling to the good doctor, tattoo removal by laser is a well-known skin client would cost Rs 30,000 upwards).

Nevertheless, I still went on and had another ink job done a few years later (Andi/Rich had quit the skin; we never after he did my squiggle). This time around, the artist used an honest-to-goodness machine that vibrated, purred, and whined on a 12-round-can density tool from on my chest.

Various articles had been written about the pull of ink on skin. In fact, they are very personal experiences of the author and the human condition. It would be overkill to discuss the whys and wherefores now or go into a deeper discussion of the cultural significance of skin art, as my physician had pointed out that piercings and tattoos are no longer in vogue. Even so, I wear my "scars" with quite pride.

The talking years are now the of passage. They represent of a personal struggle—one that I've had to face as a child. I had been very sickly. Visit to hospitals were a frequent occurrence. My childhood memories are closely interlocked with images of syringes and IV drips. In those days, each time a needle pierced my skin, I ripped my body, shut my eyes, and cried tears. When I had my first tattoo done, I kept my eyes open throughout the process. I was not looking, though. My hand to make back to healed, I felt liberated. Into my true.

Yeah, it could be called temporary insanity, for who-ever lived in perpetual adolescence? The markings, however, stay to bear witness to who I am. They call to mind the-any-years—of which many I've made. Each healed wound told me-thing about the one who created it. In battles he fought, the personal demons he overcame.

So, cheers for those telltale signs that I've intentionally lost my hold on reality. Because viewed from over here, they are testament that I got my grip back somehow.

Michael T. Quiocho, 28, is an Anthropology graduate of Silliman University in Dumaguete City and is at present doing home-based freelance editorial work.

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THEY SAID

Pushing the envelope

"So the Palvadors has done before, as she's doing it again. She has pushed the envelope but within bounds consistent with jurisprudence and has not gone so as really render a verdict on their legality or wisdom."

—Sen. Rodolfo "Rodolfo" Ganito III, after President Arroyo appointed her to Commission on Elections

Basic qualification?

"What the Comelec is saying is that you cannot be the president of the country if you're not rich."

—Commissioner Nicanor Perlas, after being excluded by the Commission on Elections from the presidential race supposedly because he did not have the capacity to handle a national campaign

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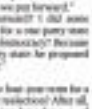
Makeover

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III



KELLOY CALABASA/ MADAM TOGS 308: TO brief you on the ongoing makeover?

"Yesterday Ingrid Food meeting? I read about it in the papers, did we have to announce it?"

"Why not? How else will people know we're trying to reinvent him?"

"I guess. How's reinvent him as Quezon?"

"Why, who else can we reinvent him as?"

"I don't know, someone here said, why not Magsaysay? You know, symbol of defense, anyone, even, recruiting the job, young dynamic..."

"One word: Lamas."

"What?"

"You're not young to remember. But there are still those who can sing Mambo Magsaysay' and the lyrics are just too embarrassing."

"How?"

Well, there's a part of the song that goes, 'First they voted in Lamas' At just six months [at short] they elected Magsaysay Ti! Magsaysay showed their love'"

"Wow, really catchy!"

"So, but it will remind people of Madam, our record as reelectors, and our party's regional chairmen—Lamas, Magsaysay, Barzaga—are now model body! Who a bundle or a cloak,' and 'Too much people's money spent that on human power-mom. No more built in 10 percent. If Magsaysay is president?"

"Sounds catchy, what's wrong with that?"

"It will remind people of Madam and that 'inordinate the power' Imelda Marcos."

"Oh, that's bad! Well, why not say, a love like Rizal?"

"You want to remind people of Rizal Day anniversary?"

"No, that's bad, I guess. But why Quezon? Are they similar at all? I can't think any of the adjectives the editors used could apply to him. stupid-ness? Lolo-ness? Irresponsible? Impassive? Heartless? I could go on and on..."

"Oh, never mind that. Our voters are young

They don't know anything. They have no basis for comparison other than what we put forward."

"What are we putting forward?" I did some reading, but are we going to go for a one party state and then explore party-less democracy? Because after building up a one-party state he proposed abolishing parties altogether."

"Good God, no."

"Oh. Well we go back to the four-year term for a president with only one term for vice-president? After all, like they said, 'Six years is too long for a good president and four years is to short for a good one?'"

"Are you crazy? It will remind people Madam's been there for nine years and well, you know what they think..."

"Oh. That's bad. Well, will we abandon our proposals for amendments and strengthen the Senate (which Quezon removed) with blue ribbon like he put in place to strengthen parties?"

"God forbid, no."

"Will he then take a line found with crooks? Mass suspensions, dismissals, to hunting-ism, Gestapo, the police?"

"Are you crazy? In beginning to understand why Madam's husband hates you."

"I'm just trying to figure out how the makeover is supposed to make sense. I thought our line is, 'This is not about popularity. This is about the candidate's competence and intelligence.' But Quezon was popular; he got 68 percent in 1935 and 82 percent in 1941..."

"Stop it! Stop it! Stop it! Focus on the competence and intelligence."

"Then why not Diosdado Macapagal? A Ph.D in Law and Economics? He held so many jobs in government..."

"Shut. Can't you see? It would remind people of..."

"Oh! That's bad."

"Yes. You see?"

"Well, Quezon rose to power by splitting his party twice. We're going to split the party?"

"Well, no. The party's not the problem. Look, can I take problem? Are you? Our friends?"

"Well, no."

"See? So the problem is ... Madam?"

"Can't believe you said that!"

"That's OK. Madam knows. She's OK with out saying it. Anyway, it's not what you say, it's how you say it."

"And how are we — in be — going to say it?"

"Well, we found the perfect line. My loyalty to my party ends where my loyalty to my country begins."

"But you just said the party's not the problem."

"We'll adapt it. My loyalty to Madam ends where my loyalty to the country begins. How about that, eh?"

"Gosh. And you think Madam will be OK with that?"

"Better than OK. She's ordering him — to — say it!"

"Yes, speechless! Is that's the whole point of the makeover? I was wondering why it had really ing to do with ..."

"Which-what you're saying. There are limits."

"Oops. CEO Makes sense now."

"Good, that reminds me, there's something else I was told to talk to you about. Since we'll be forgetting, I was told you wanted to explain for the 10,000 kind of green paint you used? Sec Madam wants you to call this number and ask everything has been, you know, an eye will, you understand?"

"Reverse is in?"

Why Rizal didn't get his wish

LETTERS

NATIONAL HISTORICAL INSTITUTE Chair Ambeth Ocampo was quoted by the Inquirer (12/30/09) as having remarked in a recent lecture that Rizal's wish on how he was to be buried was never fulfilled. That is true, but Ocampo did not explain why. Before this is explained, the impression would be made that his family was responsible for it, a fault that was totally devoted to Rizal.

According to historical writer Carlos Quirino, in his biography of Rizal titled "The Great Malayan," "The corpse of Rizal remained at the Luneta for about seventy minutes before the Brothers of Charity travelled it off in a car to the Paco cemetery where it was buried for an unmarked grave." "No member of Rizal's family showered the cemetery as they were in their homes 'under the sacred fence of armed guards.'"

Jose Baron Fernandez, a Spanish historian, wrote in his book, 'Jose Rizal, Filipino Doctor and Patriot': "The body of Rizal was placed in a van and with the greatest secrecy buried in the old and unused Paco cemetery. Brothers [Rizal's brother] wanted to comply with the last wish of her son, i.e., that the family should take charge of his cadaver." Hours after Rizal's execution, his sister, Narcisa, went to all the consuls set in Manila to claim his last belongings.

"On the way back, she saw through the open gate of the Paco cemetery some guards (other than the guards). The gate for a date. She entered the cemetery and after much searching found a grave with freshly turned earth. She gave the gravedigger a tip and planted a plaque with the initials of her brother in reverse, R.P.J., that is Rizal, Prosper Jose." This was to mislead the authorities who might connect his remains to another one.

Two years later, in August 1898, a few days after the Americans took Manila, Narcisa obtained permission to exhume his body. Biographer Austin Coates in "Rizal—Filipino Nationalist and Patriot," wrote that Rizal's body was immediately identified through his tattered shoes and clothes, and when the body was buried "unconfined," meaning it was not even placed in a casket.

The Catholic Church, which claimed that Rizal had recanted his writings criticizing the Church, did not say Mass for the hero who had enabled it the Masses, the Aristocrats. This was one of the reasons cited by Coates and others who disbelieve the claim that Rizal had recanted. For if Rizal had really died in the bosom of the Church, as claimed, he would have been accorded the Catholic burial rites due a prodigal son. Coates also observed that the alleged beam of emaciation was not signed by Rizal but was a forgery.

—DANIEL E. SLEMBER,
spokesperson, Movement for Truth in History
Email is HIDDEN, mfahistory@yahoo.com

Bill against noise pollution doesn't go far enough

A NATIONAL LAW TO REGULATE NOISE pollution is long overdue. House Bill 7372, authored by Reps. Dan Arroyo, Rodolfo Biazon, Fernando Cabigao et al., could be a step in the right direction, but by banning its target to seven only seems too generous and the blowing of horns in "non-emergency situations" is nowhere near short of creating an encompassing and effective law.

Horns + close bar makers control that, street dogs, automobiles, none of which are equipped with regulative exhaust mufflers (cosmos, the motor vehicles that pass through non-commercial residential areas are obsolete, unnecessary, and property with straight exhaust pipes! And if the real intent of the law is to safeguard the general health and well-being of residents in non-commercial districts, then why leave an author: left out other sources of noise pollution? Some of these are:

1. Backyard home businesses producing more than normal noise like metal fabrication shops, etc.;

2. Fighting cocks and other noisy animals (including dogs);

3. Sound parties and makes where people create noise;

4. Karaoke singing and other forms of amplified sound (whether outside or within the bounds of one's property) which the ambient noise level or else "disturbs" or causes discomfort or annoyance to others beyond one's property line;

5. Playing of loud music inside restaurants, stores and malls which make normal conversation impossible.

Noise pollution levels should not be permitted from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m." Before pollution is still noise pollution between 6 a.m. and 7:59 p.m.

Home pollution, like air pollution, causes slow death. It is like stress: with a deadly consequence. It is to a minor degree. Our lawmakers should give us real.

—EDITH L. MENTAZO,
Professor in our Earth Foundation,
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Mid-Hi Wilderness

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Framers of Constitution did not deem lesbians, gays as marginalized

I AM AFRAID THE SUPREME COURT WOULD uphold, rather than reverse, the decision of the Commission on Elections denying the accreditation of the party-list group, Ang Ladlad, in the consolidated cases.

Ordinarily I believe the Comelec was right in its decision, but for the wrong reason. I mean, the poll body need not dwell on subject like "sexual orientation" and "religion" to deny Ang Ladlad's petition. It should have stayed its position from the standpoint of true public sentiment. Now? By simply quoting the relevant provision of the Constitution: "Section 5. (1), Article 'D' ... the party-list representatives shall be fifty per centum of the Commission, one-half of the seats allocated to the party-list representatives shall be filled, as provided by law, by selection or election from the labor, peasant, urban poor, indigenous cultural communities, women, youth, and such other sectors as may be provided by law except the religious sector."

Isn't it crystal clear from the foregoing that even the framers of the 1987 Constitution were themselves unprepared (either by choice or right or by the wrong reasons) to lump the gay/lesbian sectors (e.g., lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders [or LGBT]) as among the marginalized sectors eligible for party-list registration? In other words, rule or no, defining how social structures view concepts and interpret the Constitution, there is still room to do the contrary.

—RENE L. CORDOVEL,
Rm. Silver Village,
Antipolo, Rizal-per-City

Blair's failed world view

I THOUGHT IT QUITE INDECIPHERABLE FOR the business to publish "A World View" by Tony Blair (1/3/10), for which you no doubt paid a handsome fee. The article has a lot of words, but is unable to suggest solutions to our problems. The man ruled the United Kingdom for over 10 years from 1997 to 2007, and together with George Bush he was responsible for many of the international policies that have gone wrong over these long years.

Blair tells the US (above Gordon up). It remains to be seen whether the UK can in his interest from these years of war and occupation, and whether any long-term good can come out of assistance the US is giving now to Afghanistan and Palestine.

From the way he writes, you would not think that Blair took any responsibility or blame for the state of the world in which we live today. From the way he writes, you would think that he is now interested by political events, but miraculously now knows the answers to all the world's problems. He is now recommending out of the box solutions to the world. He gives advice as would financiers and governments while the banking system still totters, and he has even recently changed his religious affiliation.

Indeed the British government and its regulators, as he says in the article, 'refused more part of that failure—and he was prime minister at the time.

—BRIAN GAITER,
bsalvaterr@hotmail.com

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GMA spent P459M in Pampanga, says solon

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ing this expenditure as the basis for the disqualification case she had filed at the Commission on Elections against Ms Arroyo. The first hearing on the case is expected to be held today.

"That's the most compelling reason why she should be disqualified from running," Fuentebella said in a statement.

With Ms Arroyo as the highest official of the land, "virtually no one, not a sitting legislator and especially not an ordinary citizen like Ms Adonis-Gaspan [who is seeking the nine congressional seats], can compete with the resources that she has at her disposal," the lawmaker said, adding:

"She went through a budding botany, as of counting her own seats in Congress, and perhaps, is the prime minister position that she obviously covets."

'Improper, shameless'

Fuentebella contended that the President's spending on her hometown was not illegal, but added that this was rendered "improper and shameless" when she filed her certificate of candidacy last month.

Ms Arroyo's moves emitted months of speculation in the human belief her numerous visits to Pampanga last year.

According to documents obtained from the Department of Public Works and Highways, Ms Arroyo approved roughly 40 infrastructure projects in Pampanga's second district in 2009.

Those ranged from a health center in Barangay Concepcion (P588,000), to a dredging and desilting project in Lubao (P799,000), to the upgrading of an access road to Bulu Mt. Resort from gravel to concrete (P117 million).

Most of the projects involved dredging, slope protection and upgrading of third-class roads to national roads.

'Uneven' fight

Hontiveros said Ms Arroyo's participation in the campaign, noted that had made the fight "uneven" considering her purported enthusiasm in deploying government resources for her interests.

"She has shown in 2006 that she is willing to use her position to influence an election official and to mobilize the military to protect her votes. If she can use the funds of the government in a spending spree for her district, then anything goes when abusing her powers to ensure her victory," Hontiveros said.

This is why the reelection ban on the President should also cover her term for a lower post, the lawmaker said.

50 in 2009

In 2009 alone, Ms Arroyo made around 50 visits in Metro Pampanga, mostly to the towns of Florida Blanca, Guagua, Lubao, Porac, San Rita and Sasmuan in the second district.

On Dec. 9, days after she filed her certificate of candidacy as congresswoman, she visited Lubao in the second district to sign a law converting Don Honorio Ventura College of Arts and Trade into a technological state university.

She also inspected widening and dredging projects in the Guagua section of Jose Abad Santos Avenue (formerly Capas-San Fernando-Olongapo Road).

On Dec. 11, she visited Lubao, where she led awarding rites for outstanding senior citizens in Pampanga. She also awarded a certificate of accreditation to a senior citizens' organization.

On Dec. 15, even before she announced her intention to seek a congressional post, Ms Arroyo led the distribution of relief goods to typhoon and flood victims in Lubao.

She also witnessed the turnover of bamboo desks to members of Gumasua Pasig Elementary School, opened a water system, inspected the diversion road and met with residents of various barangays.

Wakes etc.

On Sept. 27, the President showed up at the wake of landslide victims at the barn of Ms Arroyo, where she distributed cash to affected families and food packs to evacuees housed at Assyut Elementary School.

Also in September, she visited flood-stricken areas and inspected a school building and dikes in another town in Floridablanca.

On August, Ms Arroyo announced the allocation of P500 million to repair school buildings destroyed or damaged by floods and typhoons, P138 million of which, she said, would go to Pampanga's second and fourth districts.

She awarded 46 lot certificates to families relocated to a housing site in Barangay San Antonio in Sasmuan.

In July, a few hours before flying to the United States for a meeting with US President Barack Obama, she managed a visit to the province to inaugurate water systems, hand over firearms and inspect the drying of a creek.

More frequent visits

Earlier in 2009, Ms Arroyo visited Pampanga monthly, or even more frequently.

In February, she attended the founding rites of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines' Pampanga chapter and addressed her supporters' group, a unit of a nationwide "grassroots" movement in Floridablanca.

In March, she handed P68,000 to livelihood assistance to former rebels in Candaba, Pampanga, and met San Fernando Archbishop Paciano Aniceto and held a Cabinet meeting in Clark.

Likewise, she met with farmers and leaders of irrigators' associations, inaugurated the new Arayat public market and attended the groundbreaking for the new JP Rodriguez Memorial Hospital in Bacolor.

On her 62nd birthday in April, she attended Mass celebrated by Archbishop Antonio and 18 priests at St. Augustine Church in Lubao. Also in April, she inaugurated the farm road in Barangay San Basilio, Sta. Rita.

'Payback time'

In May, Ms Arroyo addressed farmers from Pampanga, Bulacan and Nueva Ecija gathered in San Fernando for the farmers' Day celebration, visited Mariveles to inaugurate a public school and distributed PhilHealth cards and scholarship certificates.

She became the first President to visit the remote coastal barangay of Barang Dim and handed more than 300 certificates of commitment for scholarship worth P1.25 million.

In the same month, her then spokesperson Lorelei Fajardo called the President's frequent visits to Pampanga "payback time for her province mates."

With a report from Mary Rhodora, Inquirer Research

Bishop hits hidden agenda behind GMA bid for House seat

From page A1

working in a Catholic bishop.

"Anything again now will confirm the people's suspicions about the hidden agenda in proposing the President to move," Bishop Bishop Arturo Bastes said over Church-run Radio Veritas.

Critics claim that Ms Arroyo, who is barred from seeking another term as president, is running for a House seat to let home province, Pampanga, so she could head off suits against her.

Ms Arroyo has been accused of corruption, stealing the 2004 presidential election, human rights violations, among other things.

A militant lawmaker said a bill calling for a constitutional convention (Con-con) was part of a scheme to remain her to power, possible as prime minister, under a parliamentary system of government. A prime minister will most likely be immune from suit, a privilege currently enjoyed by the President.

Foolish moves

"Congress should no longer take such a foolish move which is clearly unpopular at this time," Bastes said.

A House stalwart majority leader, Rep. Prospero Nograles (D, Davao City), said he regretted that Ms Arroyo was pushing for House Bill No. 6935 and was considering putting it on the agenda of the proposed special session to ensure its passage.

HB 6935 seeks to implement constitutional resolutions of the Senate and the House calling for a convention to amend the Charter and appropriates funds for this.

Constituted by 32 lawmakers, the bill calls for electing con-con delegates in every legislative district in the convention. The Con-con elections would be held simultaneously with the barangay polls on Oct. 25.

"Still help us. I respect the motive. Let us pray hard for God to touch the hearts and minds of the people who are pushing this Con-con bill," Bishop Bastes added.

Oppose and pray

Manuel Bishop Dinualdo Gutierrez said the Catholic hierarchy would "oppose and pray" against the revival of Charter change (Cha-cha) moves at this time.

"Our motive is respect," he said. "We should watch and pray. The devil is like a roaring lion ready to devour its prey."

Cubao-an Bishop Deogratias Miguel said the public should be vigilant because the government has "hotel issues" to note in its agenda.

"We should find out the intention of the President. Is this for the public good or for her own interest?" he said.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines has announced moves to overhaul the Constitution, saying those in power could take advantage of the opportunity to lift term limits.

Palace keeps distance

Amid the uproar over HB 6935, Malacañang has distanced itself from an ally's pronouncement that Ms Arroyo wants the measure tackled at a proposed Congress' special session before the May elections.

"What I know is that I have never known of any instruction

from the President about her plan to call a special session on this particular issue. There's no such thing," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said at a briefing.

Ermita noted that Ms Arroyo had certified eight measures as urgent, including the disaster-risk reduction management bill, gun control bill and the proposed Philippine Maritime Act.

But is Ms Arroyo sending the message to administration lawmakers that the Con-con bill should not be prioritized?

"There is no such instruction ... I don't know of any such instruction—and I don't know whether that is ever discussed even here among the Cabinet and, for that matter, with the political adviser of the President," Ermita said.

He said it would be premature even to conclude that Ms Arroyo would benefit from the passage of such a measure if she votes in her unprecedented run for a seat in the House.

Asked whether she was open to such a bill, he said: "Since we've not talked about it, I don't know what's on her mind about the matter."

LP to withdraw support

In the House, Liberal Party (LP) representatives are considering withdrawing support for HB 6935.

"If it is going to be used as part of a scheme to enable the administration's plan for a parliamentary, the President Arroyo, I will likely withdraw my support," said Mandaluyong Rep. Rufino Biazon.

Cavite Rep. Joseph Emilio Abaya said consultations had changed tremendously when he first office. He expressed confidence in the commitment some LP Con-con's heads to change the Constitution being pushed by administration lawmakers in the House.

The House abandoned the Con-con issue, which involves a joint voting of the Senate and the House, last year due to public opposition.

Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile and Sen. Francis Pangilinan said the Senate would oppose any Charter changes initiative by the administration.

There is no pro-Cha-cha resolution in the Senate, instead, it unanimously passed a resolution condemning any move to convene a Constitution before the 2010 elections. With a report from Michael Lim Ubac

Surprise! Planas new GMA mouthpiece

From page A1

new job with a positive mind.

"What I see in the entire economy are negative things and when you see negative, nothing will happen," she said. "So, I always advocate positivism."

The former Quezon City vice mayor said she would not focus on defending the unpopular Ms Arroyo, but instead help the public know "what kind of person she is."

Planas linked his reverse, who has consistently obtained negative public approval ratings and is set to step down in June, to the country's most hardworking president.

"I have been acquainted with [GMA] personally," she said. "I will say—and yes, will agree—that even with [Ms Arroyo's] pseudo-constituted, they still cannot measure up to her hard work," the told reporters.

"One thing I oneself you is I am 79 years old now and I have witnessed the presidencies of Manuel L. Quezon down to that of the present president," she added.

Fajardo fiasco

Planas takes over the functions of Lorelei Fajardo and Anthony Golez, Ms Arroyo's former spokespersons.

Fajardo lost her job after telling the media that Ms Arroyo was still keeping her friendship with members of the Ampatuan clan despite their alleged involvement in the massacre of at least 57 people in Maguindanao on Nov. 23.

Golez resigned to monitor a case in the House of Representatives.

Planas said she got the call from Malacañang only on Monday and immediately accepted the job.

Project correct picture

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the Palace tapped Planas because "she knows the mind of the President and she will be very, very helpful in projecting the correct picture about the activities the President is doing."

"I feel for her because she [Ms Arroyo] has been battered a lot and yet, she carried the unsung silence," said Planas, also the executive director of the Sagip Pilipino Foundation.

Accomplishments

Abat Planas said that she would advocate positivism, focusing on the "gains" and "accomplishments" at the briefing.

One programs such as the conditional cash transfer program which supposedly had benefited 887,882 households as of August last year.

Ermita also reported that nearly 89 percent of all barangays in the country now had power lines and that 240,078 individuals had been provided with emergency employment as of November.

The employment figure was a far cry from the one million jobs the government had promised to generate in 2008 alone.

"The President is battle-ready and very focused on her job," he said. "We are proud for some we have something to be proud of."

Lawyer among spokespersons

With her appointment, Planas became the four lawyer among Ms Arroyo's five spokespersons. The others are Press Secretary Cerge Remonde, Gary Olivar, Sally Tang, palace, and Golez.

Olivar, media's questions about the legal aspect of issues not referred to the Department of Justice or to the presidential legal advisers.

Tenure said Olivar was also being promoted to a full-time deputy presidential spokesperson, not just the media liaison on economic matters.

Kenney's RP stint tough act to follow

From page A1

named Kerry Thomas as Washington's new envoy to Manila, replacing the media savvy Kenney after more than three and a half years in the country.

Kenney supported Philippine efforts to end the threatening separatist insurgency in Mindanao by travelling to Camp Bangsamoro, the main base camp of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, in February 2008 and meeting with MILF chief Murad Ebrahim.

Softening rough edges

The "Pajama," a classic 1970s song by Polish jazz vocalist Urszula Dudziak, gained widespread popularity in the Philippines in 2007 after the distant TV game show "Pilipinas, Game KNB?" hosted by Edu Manzano turned it into a dance hall.

"I don't think [one] more or less life dreamed that I would have a sentimental penalty in my house but it's a huge honor," Kenney later told reporters.

"I am just a small part of a great partnership. It's not about one person but about two nations working together," she added.

Kenney said she would spend her last 18 days in the country going around to say her farewell to government officials and friends, adding that the warmth of Filipinos was among the things she would miss.

"I will miss everything, from the shopkeepers who greet you when you walk in, the faces of the children," she added.

Bastes said in his speech during the ceremonies that Kenney had managed to "soften the rough-edges" of the RP-US relationship through humanitarian support and bilateral programs.

Hands-on diplomacy

"Diplomacy never envisioned a hands-on approach... the usual one today more bilateral, multilateral and international relations sometimes go more hand[s] by people don't support the government's programs with a foreign ease, but that changed with Ambassador Kenney," Bastes said.

During Kenney's stint, the military received various assistance from the US government, according to the AFP.

Washington contributed several ancillary boats and two Bastos whalers to the Philippine Navy and handed over $800,000 worth of C3-can machine to the Philippine Homeland Medical Corps.

Kenney, with the World Bank country director Bert Hofman, also signed a grant agreement amounting to $750,000 for the Bangsa Moro Mindanao Trust Fund Agency. *With reports from Cynthia D. Balana*

IN THE KNOW: Who is Charise Planas?

LAWYER CHARITO PLANAS was a political and human rights activist who was exiled to the United States during the Marcos administration.

She was part of the Lakas ng Bansa (Nation) ticket in Metro Manila for the Interim Batasang Pambansa elections on April 8, 1978, which included among others Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr., Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and activist Alex Boncayao.

Lakas ng Bansa opposed the Batasang Bagong Lipunan ticket, led by then First Lady Imelda Marcos.

Planas was jailed by the Marcos dictatorship in 1982 and released after a month.

She married Pimentel, but was able to escape with the help of some nuns. She went to Malaysia then spent eight years in exile in America.

A current president of the Quezon City Parks Development Foundation Inc., which manages the Quezon Memorial Circle, she is also known as an advocate of women's causes.

She was the vice mayor of Quezon City from 1992 to 1995. *Inquirer Research*

Sources: qcpdfi.com.ph, PDI Archives, PDI Research Archives

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SPORTS

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Williams powers Realtors

Victory over Rain or Shine props SLR outright bid

By Mucogllo R. Carillo

WITH A DOMINATING PERFORMANCE on both ends, Kelly Williams put SLR in Lucio last night on the right gear for a long uphill climb for the remainder of the MPC PBA Philippine Cup eliminations.

Williams scored 15 points in the fourth period, including six of the finished first eight in the last nine minutes as they stayed alive in the hunt for an outright playoff berth with a 93-91 win over Rain or Shine at the Araneta Coliseum.

"We're the leader of the team," Sta. Lucia coach Bonjer Fernandez of the 6-foot-7 swingman, the 2000 MVP. "Kelly really stepped up in the dying moments."

Williams finished with 23 points, 19 rebounds, three assists, two blocks and the same number of steals in an all-around show which left the Elasto Painters befuddled, especially in the stretch.

The Realtors improved to 6-6 and remained in the hunt for an automatic berth in the quarterfinals. Though they remained almost two full games behind No. 5 at the moment, Fernandez believed their target is achievable.

"That's one goal at the moment (making the quarterfinals outright)," he said. "If we want to have an easy way to the quarterfinals, we have to keep on winning. I know that winning five (outright games) is tough, but we will take it one game at a time.

"For us, the key is to rest long a second game, because there is No. 5 [in the standings] here six hours after."

The Painters dropped to 4-7 and were saved to bounce back in their final three games to get a relatively favorable position in the wild card phase.

Gabe Norwood led the Painters with 18 points but was effectively shut down as just a free throw in the final period.

Rain or Shine actually scored just two free throws inside the final 21:35, with their last field goal, a triple by Jeff Chan, making it 89-87.

Williams then did the rest as the other rival with two free throws off Jay-R Reyes, who fouled him on the drive at the time-release mark.

Alex Jerry Cruz missed a triple, Williams drained a jumper from about 20 feet before hitting another in the new Sta. Lucia offensive for 93-89 with 246.3 seconds left.

The new Rain or Shine points came courtesy of Chan's with 4.0 left, when he made two of three free throws off a Gabby Espinas foul.

The scores:

Sta Lucia (93)—Ilon 8, Yap 5, Williams 23, Asbaurt 11, Cawaling 11, Fernandez 9, Ildefonso 8, Navarro 1, Perez 6, Abuda 6, Salvador 3, Arnaiz 8, Tenebroso 0, Dionisio 0.

Rain or Shine (91)—Ilaga 14, Ayaay 11, Serrano 11, Belmonte 8, Reyes 6, Espinas 6, Chan 6, Slaughter 4, Custodio 2, Cawaling 0, Apacible 0.

Quarters: 20-18, 39-38, 71-63, 93-91

GLITZY Rain or Shine guard Jireh Ibanez (front) and Sta. Lucia slasher Joseph Yeo for the loose ball.

Second Game

STA. LUCIA (93)—Williams 23, Yeo 12, Ilaga 11, Dionisio 10, Asbaurt 9, Cawaling 8, Fernandez 6, Ildefonso 5, Navarro 3, Abuda 2, Perez 2, Salvador 1, Arnaiz 1, Tenebroso 0.

RAIN OR SHINE (91)—Norwood 18, Chan 17, Belmonte 14, Lanete 12, Cruz 10, Yap 7, Arana 4, Reyes 3, Hrdinski 2, Ramos 2, Ildefonso 1.

Quarters: 20-20, 47-44, 71-68, 91-93

Gag order on fight mediation hearing

By Ray Loarca

THEY ARE FOR NEWS BLACKOUTS AND BEFORE in talk about what transpired.

Team Pacquiao and Team Mayweather, complying with a gag order issued Tuesday (Wednesday in Manila), are keeping lips zipping on the fate of the negotiated bout pitting Filipino icon Manny Pacquiao against undefeated American Floyd Mayweather Jr.

But the long conciliation session, presided by retired federal judge Daniel Weinstein, provides hope that both sides are willing to find a common ground and resume negotiations for the fight projected to happen March 13 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

Top dawgs Bob Arum and Todd Duboef, representing Pacquiao, and Golden Boy Promotions' Richard Schaefer and Oscar De La Hoya, representing Mayweather together with the flamboyant boxer's manager Al Haymon, said they had been told to make no public comments after their meeting in Santa Monica in Los Angeles, California.

The gag order was said to the invitation in an effort to resolve their dispute over the methods and frequency of drug testing for the bout which is estimated to generate earnings of $225 million each for the world's top two pound-for-pound boxers.

Despite the snag in negotiations, International boxing promoter Bert "Wasker" Suhol, a friend of Pacquiao, believes that the Pacquiao-Mayweather showdown is bound to happen.

The Cebu-based Suhol told the Inquirer on Monday that the fight is too big not to happen.

"Otherwise, the [boxing] fans are going to get angry," said Suhol, who, however, prefers that the discussions be held in Los Angeles.

Suhol said Pacquiao would be too busy with his campaign for a congressional seat in Sarangani province in the coming months.

Prayer please for Philippine sports

BARE EYE

Alexis Trinidad

* * *

Thank you very much, join the circus, sir.

At least it meant he said we didn't fly.

It was indeed a long shot at points [in PP square], soldier-class boxing with only half a ticket in the national lotto.

But our stallion can not succeed so we will never file to pursuing damage.

* * *

What we cannot accept is the slur Go Teng Kok, Cojuangco's machiavellian double-dealer, has been peddling about members of the Manila sports media having been bought to make Angping look good.

OK, Go can never be expected to speak with a straight face.

Just the same, we challenge him to make the accusation in public, so before our superiors.

We would also dare Cojuangco to join Go.

* * *

Anyway, what we honestly suspect is that Cojuangco had refused the invitation because it would also make both media and Angping look good.

But, come to think of it, isn't it the inherent right of all right-thinking citizens to answer wrong for the common good?

In fact, we got many text messages congratulating the PSA and wishing it good luck in its crusade.

* * *

Sorry, we included.

This reserve sure Go and his media adviser, a celebrated stinkhead king, lots fix of laughter.

So, for Go and Cojuangco, it's on with the show.

Stand by for another sporting season, featuring the bristling animosity between the country's sports czars, as main event.

* * *

Issue, this is not an excuse Cojuangco must also being unfair to himself!

But, as we went to press, we continued to receive text messages demanding that lead presidential bet Senator Aquino disassociate himself from Cojuangco, his uncle.

Poor Noynoy, not even this one of the heroic couple Mina and Cory could choose his relatives.

Anyway, the good news is that, despite his imperfections, Doping Cojuangco cannot be expected to do enough harm and lose the presidency for Noynoy.

Pity, also prior to the Blessed Black Nazarene in Quiapo, whose feast day we celebrate on January 9, the Cojuangcos embarrassed themselves and charity in his candour feast between nun and the Mayflour pills.

Soon to rise: Adriatico Mall

FOR NOW, CALL IT ADRIATICO MALL.

What was once a row of lone joints under the stands of the Rizal Memorial Track-Football Stadium along Adriatico Street will soon be transformed into a commercial center beginning this week.

Expected to be finished in late April, the center just across the Harrison Plaza and the Century Park Hotel will house of a convenience store, coffee shops and other businesses.

PSC chair Harry Angping said construction funds will come from the P1 million that he became governed by the PSC since the two-time former Manila representative replaced Buck Bambina as agency head a year ago.

Angping said the PSC expects an income of P1 million per month for the rental of the 30 establishments in the center.

The PSC removed the strip of lone joints last year following reports that snatches and arbitrators used to frequent the area. *Jane Navarro*

SPORTSWATCH

CAGAYAN Rep. Jack Enrile (2nd from left) wants the 2009 Nonoc Rider of the Year awardees—Kenneth San Andres (left, motocross), Mateo Bunsay (third from left, road racing) and Johnlery Estolano (fifth from left, motocross). Also present are Nonoc president and GAM vice president Madey Carapiet (third from right) and Nonoc vice president Archie Valdez. For details, visit www.nonoc.org

PSC Asian Games fund gets huge boost

By Jane Navarro

THE ASIAN GAMES FUND OF the Philippine Sports Commission is getting bigger faster than expected.

With an P86-million savings from the Southeast Asian Games, the government sports agency found two more sources of funds for the Guangzhou Asiad—proceeds from the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and the balance of Daklanan.

PSC chair Harry Angping says he day said the agency will get a percentage from the proceeds of the 6/49 lotto in six special sweepstakes drawn for sports within the year based on the PSC's agreement with PCSO officials.

This came on suggestion coming on top of an earlier deal with PCSO general manager Rosario Uriarte where the PSC can earn a maximum of P30 million this year from its share in the PCSO revenue.

Angping said the PSC will also receive from the Bureau of Customs 11 percent of its tax collections from imported sports equipment, accessories and apparel.

"It will all go to the Asian Games building," said Angping, who plans to identify 30 athletes which the PSC will financially support all the way to the Asiad on Nov. 16 to 27.

Angping said the agency found cost-only recently that it is entitled to a share from the customs tariff of all sports-related products regardless of the goods' point of entry in the country.

The PSC aimed at least P80 million after spending only P50 million for a 221-member contingent that captured 369 of the 36 gold medals that boosted the country to fifth place overall in the Laos SEA Games.

Beefed-up RP booters join Taiwan tourney

CHAOS HUFFINGTON-BRITISH PLAYERS CHRIS Greatwich, Chad Gould and Rob Gier have been installed in the national football team for the upcoming Taiwan-Philippines Interclubs Friendship Cup in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, from Jan. 14 to 18.

The trio will join stalwarts Danilo Caligdong, Jun Intrinera, Aly Borromeo and Anton del Rosario as well as collegiate aces Rey Dimaculangan and Jerome Profeta.

Coaches Dan Shelz and Jeremie Simpson of Far Eastern is the squad that will be handled for the first time by Helmut Desmond Bulgan.

The squad, however, will miss key players in Pulbem goalkeeper Neil Etheridge and Ilocandia Greatwich, who are sidelined by injuries.

Also included in the national squad, which will also see action in the Asian football Championships in October, are brothers Gerard and Antonio Ortalla and newcomers Manuel Ott and goalkeeper Paolo Pascual.

The tournament marks the first time the team will play since April last year, when they entered one game in the 2009 AFC Challenge Cup after losing three of their four matches in a qualifier in the Maldives.

Gadiel P. Ilgnos

Stern hoping to boost ties with local basketball

STERN

By Francis T.I. Ochoa

DAVID STERN WILL CONTINUE TO PUSH the National Basketball Association to the front corners of the world while trying to strengthen relationships with its top partners – including the Philippines.

"For us, the game is continued growth," Stern told the Inquirer in a phone interview recently. "We try to be the No. 1 or No. 2 sport in every country. The two places where we know we are the No. 1 sport are the Philippines and China."

"The Philippines is the No. 1 market outside of the US in terms of participation," he added.

The NBA has made steps in this basketball-crazy country through visits from some of its biggest superstars and such notable programs as the Jordan Silks.

Among the big names who have dropped by include LA Lakers superstar Kobe Bryant, Boston Celtics captain Paul Pierce, Washington Wizards gunner Gilbert Arenas, Cleveland Cavaliers new addition Shaquille O'Neal, Phoenix Suns rookie Grant Hill and Miami Heat coach Erik Spoelstra – who is half Filipino.

Aside from these superstars here and in other countries have helped the NBA establish itself as a dominant force in the sports entertainment market worldwide.

"As we seek to expand in this era of globalization, we feel it's great to have players visible all over the world that fans are enormously interested in," explained Stern.

Stojakovic and Gobles big man Hedo Gurcan have toured Asia and reigning league MVP LeBron James of the Cleveland Cavaliers has gone to Europe as the NBA continue to ride the globalization wave. Teams have also played exhibition matches outside the United States.

However, Stern doesn't see an exhibition game in the Philippines just yet.

"I have to get one of the business of promising exhibition matches," he said jokingly when pressed for a timetable. "It is hard work."

But he said NBA activities will continue in the Philippines, which he credits for being one of the NBA's major television markets.

The league started airing games in the Philippines in 1987 and currently feeds 13 live games per week to over 18 million households in the country. Stern cited the NBA Cares program, the league's social awareness arm, as making continued inroads here.

And on the possibility that someday, the NBA will create as one of its foreign players, someone from the Philippines?

"I'm sure we will."

He'll be back

IT'S TIME THAT I PUT IN PAPER MY thoughts on the Tiger Woods issue.

I am a self-confessed fan of the man and reading about him in the papers these past months was a painful experience for me.

Unlike in the past, his conquests were all made on the golf course.

This time, the story was different.

* * *

It's difficult to say what may have caused him to do the things the newspapers said he did. I will not attempt to go into that.

I say this only because not many of us have had the experience of being a person written about by the press.

HEART, SOUL, SPORTS

Tommy Manotoc

His decision up to this point to remain silent about the issue and not come out in the open to "explain" his side leaves us helplessly, like us Opeds, to something I can identify with.

* * *

The pitch of his career has led many of us to believe that he was more than what we would consider "human" in the golfing world.

He has been placed in such a high pedestal that perhaps he himself started to believe the image the public had of him.

And I wouldn't be surprised if the lofty view he reached actually surpassed even his own expectations for himself.

Though many golfers in the past have done results with their careers, in my opinion, it is the consistency that engulfs the golfing world with the awesomeness, golf course design, etc., that have led majority of us to place him above all who have come before him.

As a dear friend put it so aptly, "the press and the companies who were responsible for building his image up so high are also capable of taking that image down completely."

* * *

The immense pain he has caused his lines, and more importantly his family, has contributed to this newfound "image" of his.

If he wanted some compassion to drop their endorsements shrink with "Tiger fans" and probably hold their children that he is no longer a fitting role model to have.

Everyone's entitled to their own opinions.

* * *

I personally believe that a comeback is inevitable.

It will be just a matter of time.

He have all been privileged to stand witness to the personal influence he had early on in his career.

He is his number or his father, one of those main change givers.

This is an aspect that I feel holds so much more "power" in the comeback in any human being's life.

* * *

The guy has given so much to the game of golf.

In a sense he has also taken away much from it society by the way, based on what we read, he has behaved.

Not only did he take the game to a different level, he also he made us one in the flesh the game of one's color, if harnessed. The time has come for him to do a different kind of harnessing that power.

Coming from behind in terms of public acceptance will be difficult and, perhaps for others, impossible; or not exactly the case with Tiger. I believe it will be different.

By allowing him to "fish his wounds" and pick up the pieces of his present life in peace, we will be actually giving him a better chance at coming back a better, more human and humane "TIGER" for the game of golf.

And if he makes it, he will be truly hungry when he comes back it will be.

Please send comments to anonymous-sbox@yahoo.com

LOS Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant blocks former teammate Trevor Ariza of the Houston Rockets.

Lakers thump Rockets, win fourth straight

LOS ANGELES—LAMAR ODOM PRODuced a solid performance to help the Los Angeles Lakers survive a sagged offensive outing in beating the Houston Rockets, 88-79, on Tuesday.

Despite missing practice a day earlier through recurrent pain, Odom filled in for the injured Pau Gasol and nearly posted a triple-double with 17 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists.

Center Andrew Bynum had a team-high 24 points and Kobe Bryant added 22, including several key fourth-quarter plays, as the defending NBA champions grossed out a humble struggle win.

"The guy who was pretty sick and unable to practice for us ended up being the star of the game," Lakers coach Phil Jackson told reporters. "He had a terrific game. He knew we were at a deficit without Pau (Gasol)."

Carl Landry scored 19 points off the bench and Aaron Brooks chipped in 16 for the Rockets (20-13), who suffered a second straight defeat.

Trailing for a majority of the game, Houston rallied to reduce the deficit to just two points with 3:55 left but Bryant answered with an assist on a three-point play and a jumper before Bynum made a basket shot to push the lead back to 86-73.

All-Star forward Gasol missed the contest for Los Angeles (28-6) after straining his left hamstring in Sunday's win against the Dallas Mavericks.

In Portland, Oregon, Memphis closed with a 13-1 run over the final four minutes to beat Portland, 109-105.

OJ Mayo scored 27 points, hitting 10 of 18 shots including four triples, as Memphis moved above .500 for the first time this season.

Zach Randolph also scored 27 points and had a game-high 14 rebounds for the Grizzlies, who have won four consecutive games.

Brandon Roy hit 9 of 16 shots and scored 27 points to lead Portland.

In Sacramento, Phoenix snapped a seven-game road losing skid with a tight win over Sacramento, 113-109.

USES RESULTS: Player E. Magic (6) Marcin (8) Owens (4) Reggie (15) Warren (5) Johnson (10) Bibb (14) Brooks (16) Tony D. Jones (6) Jones (1)

RP stars out of Abap slugfest

By Cedrik F. Tupas

THE AMATEUR BOXING ASSOCIAtion of the Philippines (Abap) will lure national team members from the national championships for this month in the hope of discovering new talents from the tournament.

The Smart-Abap national amateur invitational championship first off Jan. 25 in Puerto Princesa City minus the stars of the national squad who have dominated the event in the past few years.

Abap executive director Ed Picazo said the move is meant to encourage new talents to prove their worth in the week-long national championships.

"It's the first time we're doing this," said Picazo. "We will screen the participants. We just want the best for the tournament. We don't want lopsided bouts."

Only five top boxers in the region at tournaments will be allowed to see action in the national championships, backed by Puerto Princesa City Mayor Edward Hagedorn, who has already signed a memorandum of agreement with Abap.

Reached City over the national championship last year with spearhead Gerson Nieto emerging as the best boxer. Nieto has already trained in Cuba and is now part of the national pool.

NCAA mulls new rule on pro draftees

THE NCAA IS PLANNING TO HIT UP A NEW rule that will prohibit players going active in the current season from joining the PBA Draft.

The new dictum recently by NCAA Manila commissioner Henry Angeles of St. Benilde, who said that the proposal will be discussed during the working group of league officials for the 86th season opening in July.

Angeles said the NCAA Policy Board will have the final decision on the proposal.

Unlike in the UAAP which bars players from joining the draft if they are still playing in the season, the NCAA, to the last two years, allowed players to apply in the draft provided they will graduate in the league.

The ruling came in the wake of the case of then San Beda Red Lion Yousif Aljamal, who joined the draft three years ago without informing the league.

The league suspended Aljamal before allowing him to play when San Beda sought a Temporary Restraining Order.

Meanwhile, the management committee head Jose Mari Lanuza of host San Beda said the Policy Board's meeting this month to deliberate on the membership applications of four schools.

Arellano U, Emilio Aguinaldo and Angeles University, which are vieing action again as guest teams this season, have applied for membership along with Lyceum.

Cedrik F. Tupas

Junior NBA gets going

MAGSANOC: A huge lift

FORMER NBA ASSISTANT COACH Florida Magsanoc yesterday urged young basketball hopefuls to take advantage of the Junior NBA program and coaches to help mold the skills of the young kids.

"The global basketball stage is opening its doors to Asian countries and we should take advantage of the opportunity that it is presenting on our youth today," Magsanoc said in a statement sent to media offices yesterday.

The worldwide program for kids 12 to 14 years old kicks off at the Ateneo Blue Eagle Gym Saturday with a coaches' clinic. The clinic will then move to Cebu City on Jan. 18 and Davao on Jan. 21.

Magsanoc heads the coaching staff of the Junior NBA presented by Hi-Drink multivitamin for this year's program along with Pureboots coach Ryan Gregorio and former two-time PBA MVP Benjie Paras.

Eleven graduates of the lineup camp started a trip to the US last year and got to watch an NBA game live.

"They were rewarded for all the hard work they put into the Jr. NBA national training camp," added Magsanoc.

The summer cup PBA playmaker stressed that the NBA clinic puts kids through skill-enhancement drills that also promotes sportsmanship, teamwork, positive attitude and respect.

"Philippine basketball is getting a huge lift through this program," Magsanoc said.

ABL: Britama triumphs

(Abl Stadium, Kuala Lumpur)
8 p.m. RP Patriot vs Mt. Oregon

AMERICAN IMPORT MARSHA MILLER shot 18 points and pulled down 22 rebounds to power Indonesian club Satria Muda Britama to a 68-57 victory on top of the Kuala Lumpur Dragons Tuesday night at the Mabo Stadium in Malaysia.

With the victory, the Indonesian quintet sole second with a 7-1 record while handing the Dragons their seventh loss in 11 matches.

Alex Hartmann poured 26 points and Widjanarko Hiantoning added 10 for Satria, which also defeated Kuala Lumpur, 91-67, in their first meeting.

Kuala Lumpur's Filipino imports Rudy Lingganay and Phoderick Standhardinger combined for 15 points.

Satria boasted on a strong start behind Miller and Hiantoning, who joined forces to give the Indonesians a 19-point lead at the break.

Cedrik F. Tupas

The scores:

SATRIA MUDA BRITAMA 68 – Hartmann 26, Miller 18, Hiantoning 10, Fahmi 6, Hidayat 5, Wahid 3, Gunawan 2, Manurung 2, Arief 2)

KL DRAGONS 57 – Lingganay 15, Standhardinger 15, Rimmer 7, Mohamad 6, Sembiring 2, L.H. Hoe 2, Ngadiran 2, Xian 2)

Quarters: 29-14, 49-37, 57-47, 68-57

Record field joins World Slasher Cup

REGISTERED PARTICIPANTS TO the 2010 World Slasher Cup 8-Ball Championship Open Tournament (WSC 2010), breaking the previous record for the most number of participants in the Olympian of cueballfighting held annually at the Amanda Coliseum.

The previous record was 207 last year.

Leading sensation Jimmy Lagera of Blue Blade has confirmed he is fielding a total of four entries.

Lagera recently bagged the Laguna Outdoor and Resorts Association's Championship Open title for the 60s, which he shared with Pol Estrellado.

Now on its 45th year, the event is slated Jan. 18 to 21 and 23 and will be hosted by the President of Champions.

For details, call P112926 or 9113101 loc. 8001 or 6051.

Also, log on to www.aimsnetwork.com and www.wscbmr.com.ph

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DID YOU KNOW

In 1898 the 1898 Philippine-American War, Gen. Pio del Pilar and his troops went to the Church of Guadalupe in Makati only to stop the Americans' offensive. But the Americans defeated them and forced them to the town's hillside.
Cyril L. Bonabento /Inquirer Research

1,000 families in Taguig face eviction

'Demolition violates MOA between village association, BCDA'

By Nitz Cuhija

ONE THOUSAND FAMILIES LIVING ALONG C-5 ROAD IN TAGUIG City face eviction from an 8.8-hectare piece of property that the city government intends to transform into an upscale commercial and residential area.

The demolition will be carried out in phases anytime this week, starting at Sitio Mayumpung in Barangay Ususan, Taguig City administrator Willie Villar told Inquirer.

The land, covering Mayumpung and Sitio Ilaya in Barangay Ususan, Ninoal in Barangay Pembo and Sitio Pack village of Barangka, is a portion of the 32.15 hectares transferred by the Base Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) to Taguig City in 1999.

Villar said the property is now under lease with developer RD Builders Inc. based on a joint agreement approved and signed by all city councilors on Jan. 25, 2008.

"It will be like Fairmont City with a mix of commercial establishments and condominiums," he added.

Cimiero Acosta, officer of Mayumpung Residents' Association Inc., said some 300 residents have received a final notice on Tuesday giving them seven days to dismantle their houses and leave the area.

Benjamin Dalan, president of the residents' group, said they would not leave until they have been assured of a relocation site within the city.

He said that if the demolition pushes through, the city government will be violating a memorandum of agreement signed by the BCDA and the Federation of Military and Civilian Residents Inc., an organization of village associations in Fort Bonifacio.

Galan explained that the MOA clearly enumerated the inquiries for the relocation such as the availability of livelihood opportunities, relocation within Taguig City, and a compensation package.

"We have been here since 1980s. They cannot drive us away just like that," Acosta said adding that the city government must produce a court order before the demolition takes place.

Villar said they have assigned a relocation site in Barangay Tuyog. Only those who have been Taguig residents since 1992, however, will be qualified for relocation.

He added that it is impossible for all families be moved within the city. "We might resume relocation sites in Antipolo or Montalban in Rizal and Sta. Rosa in Laguna," he said.

GONE FISHING
A man is silhouetted against the sun as he casts a fishing line into the bay just off Roxas Boulevard in Manila.
ROY VILLAFUERTE

Jason Aguilar nabbed in Qatar in case of mistaken identity

By Tina S. Santos

AUTHORITIES IN QATAR HAVE ARRESTED Jason Aguilar, the National Bureau of Investigation said yesterday.

But the bureau was quick to clarify that the man who was picked up by the police was not cited rape suspect Jason Aguilar John.

Lawyer Rogelio Magno, chief of the NBI Special Action Unit, said Aguilar, who has been working as a welder in Doha for only a month, was arrested on Dec. 31 because he was mistaken for John.

John was tagged as the suspect in the death of Renato Victor Eborle Jr., the son of a Malacañang official, over a traffic altercation last year.

Nearly three years later, their hotly disputed case is now being heard in a Quezon City court.

Magno said Aguilar was arrested by Qatar authorities although that they were one and the same person. But Aguilar has already been cleared. He's not the Jason whom we have been searching for," said Magno.

But just the same, Magno said Aguilar would be deported to the Philippines today to ordered by Qatar authorities "to erase doubts and to further ascertain his identity."

A record check with the Bureau of Immigration showed that Aguilar left the country before Eder allegedly shot Eborle dead on Nov. 16, Magno said.

Aguilar's relatives yesterday went to the NBI to clear his name and to ask for help following his arrest.

His sister, Janette Lopez, presented to

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LRT 1 to open two new stations

By Paolo G. Montecillo

THE LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT (LRT) LINE 1 will open two new stations next month, the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) said yesterday.

The extension, which will stretch from its north end, Roosevelt station, is part of the "closing the loop" project that aims to connect LRT Line 1 from Baclaran to Monumento, to the Metro Rail Transit (MRT) that runs along Edsa, Metro Manila's major thoroughfare.

The project connecting Line 1 to the MRT also convenes Edsa from Pasay City to North Avenue in Quezon City, will involve an entirely elevated 5.4-kilometer viaduct and will feature three new stations: Balintawak, Roosevelt and North stations.

"We are targeting the end of February as the opening date of the Balintawak and Roosevelt stations of the north extension," said LRT Authority (LRTA) Administrator Hedcliffe Bobiles.

DOTC Secretary Leandro Mendoza said all the civil works for the project pertaining to the construction of stations, platforms and railways, have already been completed.

The final stage of construction, which is

LRT 1, A-10

Taguig officials sue Comelec

By Hiba Calleja

INCUMBENT OFFICIALS YESTERDAY sought the immediate relief of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) employees for allegedly failing to clean up the city's list of registered voters.

The complainants—Vice Mayor George Elias Bikoy, barangay chairs Eduardo Rivera of Western Bicutan and former Taguig Vice Mayor Nicanor Cinco—filed an administrative complaint at the Comelec main office in Manila against Taguig election officer Marcelo Arcadio Lanuza and Michael Dimaculangan, director of the Comelec National Capital Region office.

Also included in the complaint were local Comelec employees Faisal Hamoundi, Shiekmir Imam and Yolanda Bajet.

Elias said he first endured the Commission Election Code, the national Penal Code and Republic Act 6713 after they failed to release a copy of the city's Certified Voters List and Project of Precincts in response to respondents' request for a "deliberated list."

Sought for comment, Lanuza said he did not know that a complaint had been lodged against them.

"I don't want to comment on that. Let me see the copy of the complaint first before I give you any statement," he told the Inquirer over the phone.

Earlier, Institute for Political and Electoral Reform president and former Akbayan party-list rep. Erin Tañada said that 695 voters aged 100 years old and above have been included in the list of qualified voters in Taguig.

Local Comelec officials, however, explained that this was probably due to a computer program which automatically lists a voter's birthday as Jan. 1, 1901 whenever they fail to fill out the date for their date of birth.

"Unless the city's voters database is cleansed, we fear that illegitimate voters will be disenfranchised," said Elias' spouse actor-model-turn-chef Heidi Yamaguchi-Bikoy.

He explained that Garcia wrote a letter to Lanuza last month, requesting for a list of deactivated and deceased voters. But up to now, Lanuza has yet to comply despite the lapse of the 10-day reply period as prescribed in Republic Act 6713, he added.

Elias also said they had received reports that there were double or multiple entries in the Comelec database for the city.

"[These] clearly [are] designed as soon as possible ... Until the multiple entries are cleansed and the respondents are relieved of their assignments in the Taguig City Comelec office, the opportunity to replace multiple irregular entries with new names whose statements would eventually serve as flying voters becomes a distinct possibility," he said.

Kho posts bail in case filed by Katrina Halili

By DJ Yap

FORMER CELEBRITY SURGEON Hayden Kho Jr. yesterday posted bail in connection with charges filed against him by actress Katrina Halili over the spread of videos showing his sexual encounters with Halili and other women.

He paid a bail of P60,000 for his conditional freedom even before a warrant for his arrest could be served by Judge Rodel Ta Bonifacio of Taguig City Regional Trial Court Branch 139. His lawyer Lorna Kapunan said:

"We didn't want to wait for the arrest warrant to be issued," Kapunan said in a phone interview from Honolulu, Hawaii.

Kho is facing a complaint for violation of Republic Act 9262, or the Anti-Violence Against Women and Children Act, for allegedly causing the spread of the sex videos of him with Halili or other women on the Internet.

Earlier, a panel of Department of Justice prosecutors found cause to indict Kho on charges that he exploited Halili and other women for recording their sexual encounters without their consent or knowledge.

The same panel, citing lack of evidence, dismissed the complaints against Kho's former girlfriend and celebrity doctor Vicki Belo, and three other alleged conspirators.

Dismantle other private armies

A TEXT MESSAGE FROM A friend on Tuesday in the arraignment of Datu Unsay Mayor Lindo Sinsuat Jr. at Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig City read:

"Wow, Amparoan looks like the devil incarnate."

I texted back: "Here, he doesn't look like the devil incarnate. He is the devil himself if such a thing ever exists."

It's true the Amparoan turn—from the old man André Sr. to his sons—have been only a grandmother could love (even a mother would have found their looks repulsive). They also have stratospherically high Pinoy Clerks appreciation because of their closeness to her.

* * *

With few exceptions, Maguindanaoans and Maranaos (Muslims of Lanao) have very strong features.

Even their women have strong features. By "strong" I mean the opposite of "soft."

They still retain the features of their Indonesian forebears.

* * *

I remember a friend telling me he was sent by his multinational company in Jakarta for a conference.

The night after the conference his friend, a playboy, was on the ground for beautiful women in the city.

He couldn't find any, he said.

My friend, a Minahasan, said the women looked like those from Manners and Stanli? Ayoub.

Before you guys get mad at me, it was my friend telling, not me.

* * *

The most beautiful Muslim women are found in Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.

Why do the Tausug women look different from their sisters in Mindanao and Maguindanao?

Because the Muslims of Sulu and Tawi-Tawi permit marriages with other tribes and even Christians, whereas Maguindanaoans and Maranaos are "closed" societies or xenophobic.

Xenophobia or hatred for strangers is the reason most Maranaos and Maguindanaoans marry within the family or tribe.

Marrying your own cousin or relative is inbred.

What products of incestuous relationships don't look so good. And that's putting it mildly.

If you don't believe me, just look at the Amparoans.

In colloquial Tagalog, Sinsuat Jr.'s face is called:

* * *

You think GMA has discovered the Amparoans for their crime?

Think again.

Why do you think the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group of the PNP gives the affiliation from detained at the CIDG headquarters in fastened Santos City ID's easement?

The order is give them VIP treatment apparently comes from the Palace.

* * *

Why do the Philippine National Police send the Armed Forces commandeer on discounting the private army of the Amparoans?

The Maguindanaos, the maintainers of the Amparoans, also have their own private army.

The PNP and the AFP should also dismantle the private armed group of the Maguindanaos.

Suit to fair.

* * *

A bodyguard of Bulsan, Maguindanao Vice Mayor Ismail Mangudadatu allegedly shot to death two law enforcers at the Subic Bay Freeport.

You think the Mangudadatus are behave better than the Amparoans?

Well, just because their women became victims of the Maguindanaos massacre doesn't mean they're different from the Amparoans.

If the tables were turned, the Mangudadatus would have behaved like their Amparoan.

* * *

Members of the commission to dismantle private armies (with flesh only) Tuesday:

The members were handpicked by President Aquino.

Some of the commission members is a fellow crime fighter, Dante Jimenez, head of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption.

Jimenez should have turned down this appointment because his name is just being used as a decoration.

The commission is a paper tiger.

ALL IS QUIET at the Philippine General Hospital where a call center agent, who was confined for pneumonia, killed himself by slashing his throat and wrists. ARIEL JAVIER

Man kills self in hospital

By Tina G. Santos

A 31-YEAR-OLD CALL CENTER agent was believed to have committed suicide by slitting his throat and wrists with a knife in the toilet of his room at the Philippine General Hospital in Manila early yesterday morning.

Police identified the victim only as Emmanuel Velez, a resident of Yakal Street in Mariana Bureau Village, Sta. Lucia, Pasig City. He was reportedly confined at the hospital due to pneumonia.

SPO2 Edgardo Ko of the Manila Police District homicide section said the victim's body was discovered in the toilet of his private room at the hospital at around 2 a.m. by his father, Hadina, and duty nurse Mark Kerwin Garcia.

"He kept on saying that his allowance [from his son] was late and no idea what his problem was. I just ignored him because I thought he was only kidding," the victim's father said.

He was rushed to the hospital's emergency room but was declared dead on arrival, Ko said.

Police said Velez left a suicide note addressed to his parents.

Ko said the victim's body was brought to the Manila Police District crime laboratory for autopsy.

Republic of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL MAYOR
Town, Pangasinan
Bids and Awards Committee
Contact Nos.: (074)4674000 and Telefax No.: 5672661

INVITATION TO BID

The Municipal Government of Town, Pangasinan through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to bid for the procurement under Municipal Supplemental Budget P 3, Series of 2015 (LDP Loan), such as:

Name of Contract	ABC
1. Rehabilitation of Rubiano Cart Bridge (FSP)	P 999,994.82
2. Concreting of Road Farm to Market Road	999,914.64
3. Concreting of Main Farm to Market Road	931,143.91
4. Concreting of Bridge Farm to Market Road	931,957.90
5. Concreting of Sitio Bantog Farm to Market Road	934,182.90
6. Concreting of Bantog-Bulo Farm to Market Road	999,961.19
7. Concreting of Cabaritan Farm to Market Road	934,123.88
8. Concreting of Cabaritan-Lapsan Farm to Market Road	4,999,999.96
9. Concreting of Irrelating Farm to Market Road	961,953.73
10. Concreting of Bilis Farm to Market Road	931,888.52
11. Concreting of Tabernacle Farm to Market Road	934,853.24
12. Concreting of Poblacion Farm to Market Road	4,964,150.71
13. Concreting of Poblacion Farm to Market Road	999,460.13
14. Concreting of Baguio-Poblacion Market Road	4,997,999.88
15. Construction of Tamara Farm to Market Road	1,997,999.88
16. Rehabilitation of Street Lights along National Road, Poblacion, Pangasinan	1,972,974.94

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed, within ten (10) years from the date of submission and receipt of bids, a contract similar with a value of at least 50% of this ABC. The description of an eligible bidder is contained in the Bidding Documents, particularly, in Section 5, Instruction to Bidders.

Bidding will be conducted through an open competitive bidding procedure using non-discretionary "pass/fail" criterion as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act". Prospective bidders should be registered with the PhilGEPS at www.philgeps.gov.ph.

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Publication of Bid Opportunity	January 7 to 13, 2016
2. Issuance of Bidding Documents	January 7 to 20, 2016 (8:00 AM to 5:00 PM)
3. Submission of Letter of Intent and Application for Eligibility (single entity or Joint Venture (No. of pages)	January 20, 2016 (8:00 AM)
4. Submission and Opening of Bids	January 20, 2016 (9:00 AM)
5. Bid Evaluation	January 20, 2016 (10:00 AM)
6. Post Qualification	January 20, 2016 (1:00 PM)
7. Notice of Award	January 20, 2016

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders at the Office of the BAC Secretariat, Town, Pangasinan and upon payment of non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents in the amount of One Thousand Five Hundred Pesos Only (P 1,500.00) each, payable to the Municipal Treasurer's Office, Town, Pangasinan.

The Municipal Government of Town, Pangasinan, reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Contact Person:

(Sgd.) RAMONA S. CISAIRE
Chairman, BAC Secretariat

Approved by:

(Sgd.) MARLENE C. ABELLERA
BAC Chairman

Jason Aguilar

. . . From page A17

bureau officials Aguilar's tracking papers and other documents that she claimed would prove his innocence.

"He was suddenly arrested in Cebu and we had no idea why," Lopez said. "He's innocent, he was just mistaken for somebody else."

According to the NBI, Aguilar's arrest was proof that Velez's name has already been included in blotted Red Notice, a listing of wanted persons which the police agency circulates to member countries.

"We will be alerted once he is spotted in any country, particularly if that country has an extradition treaty with the Philippine government," Muggo added.

The NBI also insisted that Velez was still in the country based on the information that it had been receiving.

Earlier, Interpol's partner, Marissa Aguilar, told the police that she had received news-mail from her son telling her that he was already in Hawaii.

Aguilar, however, did not say why and how her son was able to leave the country.

A P1-million reward has been offered for the capture of Velez, who was charged by the police in connection with Blanche's death. A warrant has been issued for his arrest.

After his shocking courtroom arrest warrant in connection with his involvement in the death of a Malacañang official, Nestor Perez, in a vehicular accident in 2004, With Nancy C. Carvajal

Bayani not tickled pink

By DJ Yap

FORMER METROPOLITAN MANILA Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando shrugged off reports that his former agency would be packing up urinals painted green, instead of his signature pink hue, saying it was a big concern.

But Fernando, whose running for vice president on the same ticket as presidential candidate Sen. Richard Gordon, admitted that he hoped some touches of pink would remain the Silver Mandaluyong-owned bus by.

"When I was the MMDA chair, Metro Manila became known as the only pink city in the world," he boasted at the Jernandina Media Forum in San Juan City yesterday. (Below, a city in France, is known as "little Rose" or "pink city" for its brick architecture.—Editor's Note)

Under his watch, the former MMDA chair restored public institutions, including urinals, footbridges and fences in pink—the same color he was known for in Manikina City where he served as mayor for several years.

Fernando, who also served his former colleagues with the same color was like, and pink represented good health for the city, as in the idiom "in the pink of health."

The MMDA, under its new chair Oscar Inocencio, is understood to be taking a project to repaint the metropolis with monumental plants and green painted urinals.

Malacañang have issued a statement saying the urinals could help the candidacy of administration standard bearer Gilbert Teodoro, whose campaign motif is green.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Regional Office No. IV-A
#4 Andanan Bldg. E. Rod. Avenue, Cubao, Quezon City
Telefax Nos.: (02) 911-1262
January 7, 2016

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATIONS FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMITS (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following employers/contractors have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permits:

	Name and Address of Company/ Employer	Name of Foreign National/Citizenship	Position
1.	MARIA PHILIPPINE MANUFACTURING CORPORATION 1 Maria Drive, Barangay Maria, Quezon	Mr. Rommel Rose (Canada)	Plant Manager
2.	VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES COLLEGE, INC. Victory St. Brgy. Poblacion 2, Alfonso, Cavite	Ms. Hyungsun Lee aka "Rose" (Korea)	Project Coordinator
3.	GREENFIELD ASIA CORPORATION Laguna Bel-Air 1, Sta. Rosa City	Mr. Kwang-Ki Choi (China)	Manager
4.	LEADSPHIL ENTERPRISES INC. Commerce Ave. Bacao 2, General Trias, Cavite	Mr. Ki-Hun Kwon (Korea)	Machine Operator
5.	LEADSPHIL ENTERPRISES INC. Commerce Ave. Bacao 2, General Trias, Cavite	Mr. Soo-Gil Yoon (Korea)	Machine Operator

If you have any information/objection to the above-mentioned application(s), please communicate with the Regional Director.

ATTY. RICARDO S. MARTINEZ, JR., CESO III
Regional Director

LRT 1 . . .

From page A17

volve the laying down of all electrical systems, is also on track.

Lloyd as one of the lynchpins of Duterte's priorities, the government wants the project rolling in time for this year's elections.

The latest government data showed that a total of 160.44 million passengers used Line 1 in 2009, beating the old record of 145.83 million passengers set in 1994.

"With this all-time high, the LRT has established itself as the alternative transportation in the metropolis for both the masses and the middle class who have learned to patronize the system. In fact, our ridership record remained high even during the times when fuel prices were low," Robbie said.

He added that the new fuel congestion, valuable fuel prices, increasing environmental awareness, the fielding of more trains, continuously improving services, and offering affordable fare rates, all contributed to the increase in passengers.

MetroBriefs

Worker injured

A 20-YEAR-OLD billboard installer was seriously injured after he touched several high-tension wires while working along Makati City yesterday. The incident took place at the Commando Calang, at Loakland Street, Barangay Rizal, Makati, was dismantling a billboard at the roof of JP Lhuillier building on Chino Roces Avenue at around 10:30 a.m. when he touched power 500 Megavolts Connor said Calang, who sustained third-degree burns on 80 percent of his body, was taken to the Capitol ng Makati where he remains confined.

Allison M. Lopez

'Cops' hijack truck

A SPEEDUP driver pretending to be policemen hijacked yesterday a truck in Manila carrying smuggled cigarettes worth almost P4 million. Pinoy investigator SPO1 Jose Landicho said that truck driver Cleo Wang, 40, and his helper Bonifacio Ramos, 25, were left by the hijackers on a deserted street in Pasay City after three men dressed as policemen commandeered their truck in Sampaloc, Manila.

Hiba Calleja

Book sheds light on Bin Laden family

OSAMA bin Laden AP

RIYADH—WITH A HUGE WEDding by one of Osama bin Laden's sons, and with news of a daughter clothing in the Saudi fire bump in four, some of the blanks are being filled in on the life of the Sept. 11, 2001 mastermind's large family, including facial details of his parenting style.

Two monks ago, the son, Omar bin Laden, revealed that many of the children who had been with their father in Afghanistan escaped to Iran following the 2001 United States-led invasion, and were still together in a walled compound under house arrest.

Conditional ties come with the news that a daughter, Iman bin Laden, had taken refuge in the Saudi Embassy in Tehran. Saudi officials are negotiating with the Iranians to allow Iman to return to Saudi Arabia, where she was born, and on Tuesday Omar bin Laden said his family hoped Iran that he, as well as his wife and mother, had applied for visas to go to Tehran and help speed Iman's case.

Omar said his wife, Zaina Alsabah, who consulted the AP to report that another bin Laden son, 23-year-old Ibrahim, had been allowed to leave on Dec. 25. It said "He arrived with great joy at the destination of his choice," and was with relatives. The e-mail did not disclose where Ibrahim was, but said he was not in Saudi Arabia.

Bin Laden's family name already vaulted into the spotlight in "Growing Up Bin Laden," written by Omar and his mother, Najwa bin Laden, and published in late October.

The book describes a brood of children—up to 20 from different marriages—who were raised from an early age by an authoritarian father who shunned the luxury his haunted wealth could buy.

The mother said in an entry that the kids grew up in Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Afghanistan without laughter or toys, were routinely beaten, and had their pets to parade death from pellet guns or gas exhaustion, by their father's fighters.

Many days because young adults, their father asked them to volunteer for suicide missions. When Omar protested, bin Laden was quoted in replying: "You hold no more a place in my heart than any other boy in the entire country. This is true for all my sons."

It was then, Omar recounted, that he "finally knew exactly where I stood. My father hated his enemies more than he loved his sons."

Speaking to AP Omar recalled reading bin Laden's remaining prayer in Afghanistan and being sure to the front lines of the civil war that was Afghanistan in the 1990s. AP

Iran renews execution threat against protesters

TEHRAN—IRAN'S INTERIOR minister warned opposition activists on Tuesday they risk execution as enemies of God if they continue anti-government demonstrations, and the foreign ministry said arrested foreigners have confessions.

Ayatollah Ahmadi Mohammadi Najjar made the latest threat after the Revolutionary Guard said on Monday several foreigners engaged in a "psychological war" against the Islamic Republic were arrested on Dec. 27 in the bloody protest more than the aftermath of the disputed June 12 presidential poll.

The opposition says the protests rigged to secure President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's re-election. The authorities deny the accusations, which they say were part of a Western-backed, Israeli plot to overthrow the Islamic system.

Eight people were killed in clashes between security forces and supporters of opposition leader Mirhossein Mousavi on the Shiite mourning day of Ashoura. More than 40 leading reformists, including four advisers to Mousavi, have been arrested.

Sifter Ashura, memos who taken part in riots will be considered as "mohareb" (waging war on God) and an opponent of national security," Najjar said, according to the official IRNA news agency. He did not give no details of their accusations or timelines.

"Enemy flame arrested are several foreigners and dual-national Iranians ... The legal procedure in connection with these cases is under way," Fars were arrested after the riots.

Most have since been released but more than 80 remainder have received jail terms of up to 15 years. Nine people have been sentenced to death but none has been executed so far.

Police said more than 300 protesters detained on Dec. 27 were still in jail. The authorities have repeatedly accused opposition leaders of links to "foreign enemies." The Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday there held included foreigners and Iranians with dual citizenship. It gave no details of their nationalities or identities.

"Among those arrested are several foreigners and dual-national Iranians ... The legal procedure in connection with these cases is under way," Fars news agency quoted spokesperson Ramin Mehmanparast told a weekly news conference.

"They will be punished if their crime is proved," UK Secretary of State Shirley Claire voiced dismay on Monday at the way the authorities have cracked down on pro-reform protesters.

Mehmanparast criticized her remarks, saying the West was "siding with a group of troublemakers" in Iran.

"Over the long run, such attitudes will jeopardize their ... countries' interests," he said, without elaboration.

Hardline clerics and lawmakers have urged the judiciary to punish opposition leaders for igniting unrest, branding them enemies of God, liable to execution under Islamic law. Reuters

CIA bomber coerced to work as Jordan spy

ZARQA, JORDAN—THE DOUpoted Jordanian double agent who killed seven CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) officers in Afghanistan was thrown into jail by Jordanian intelligence to coerce him to track down al-Qaida's No. 2 leader, Western counterterrorism officials said on Tuesday.

The 32-year-old doctor's allegiance was to al-Qaida from the start, however, and not to his Jordanian recruiters or their CIA friends—and it never wavered, a Middle East counterterrorism official told The Associated Press.

He said new information from Jordan officials gave detailed accounts of how and when Humam Khalil Abu-Mulal al-Balawi was recruited.

Jordanian intelligence believed the devout young Muslim had been persuaded to support Jordan's fight against al-Qaida militants in Afghanistan and wanted al-Balawi to help capture or kill Ayman al-Zawahri, a fellow doctor from Egypt who is Osama bin Laden's right-hand man, according to another counterterrorism official based in the Middle East.

All four spoke on condition of anonymity.

Bitally and friends said al-Balawi, a father of two young daughters, had gravitated moderate to a close in a Palestinian refugee camp near Zarqa. He homeschooled his daughters in long hours after Sheikh al-Zarqawi. One high school classmate, Mohammed Yousef, described al-Balawi as "brilliant," well-spoken and well-mannered, broadly benign mostly to himself and did not mingle much with others or friends.

The doctor also spoke openly about wanting to die in a holy war, Yousef said, adding that in Internet postings he edited extensively for jihad against Israel and the US.

"If the [news of] jihad reached a state he loved, it will not strengthen him, even if he wanted to," al-Balawi said in an interview published by the Asia Al-Sharkia, or "Line Shorden," website. AP

WORLD BRIEFS

Burmese video journalist jailed

RANGOON—A Burmese [illegible] court has handed down a 20-year jail term to a video journalist who was last with soiled cards, rights groups said on Wednesday, in the latest crackdown on dissidents in the country. Freelance reporter Ma Hla Myo, 32, was arrested in October after footage of Buddhist monks' monastery in the town of Pakokku, Pegu-based Supreme Without Borders and the Burma Media Association said in a joint statement. Ma Hla Myo was sentenced by a court in Pakokku on Dec. 31 for an alleged violation of the country's Electronics Act, the groups said. A previous arrest warning for was sentenced to 20 years in jail, they added. AFP

18 die in China coal mine fire

BEIJING—A fire in a coal mine in central China killed at least 18 workers, and search efforts continued for nine others trapped underground, state media reported on Wednesday. The Xinhua News Agency said underground explosions caught fire on Tuesday at a mine at the Lishuigoutai mine in Gangbei city in Henan province. The cause of the mine and a senior employee were detained, Xinhua said. Nine more bodies are to be recovered on Wednesday, about 340 miners underground, bringing the death toll to 18 it said. Seventy workers were making round when the fire started and 43 managed to escape, it said. AP

3 al-Qaida suspects arrested

TAIZ—Yemeni officials have arrested three suspected al-Qaeda militants who had been wounded in a raid that killed at least seven members of the group on Monday, a security source said on Wednesday. Yemeni locals said at least two al-Qaeda militants on Monday they said were behind threats that hosted United States and European embassies to close. The security source said those militants wounded in that [illegible] accident, but were arrested from hospital on Tuesday. Reuters

Suicide bomber kills 6 Russian police

MAGHACHKALA, RUSSIA—Police say a suicide bomber blew up an explosives-packed car at a police station in Russia's troubled North Caucasus, killing six officers and wounding 36. The bombing occurred at the traffic police station on the outskirts of Makhachkala, the capital of Dagestan. City police chief Shamil Gasanov says the bomber detonated the explosives at the gates of the station after police stopped him. It was Dagestan's fourth. The January, prevented further casualties. AP

1,000 homeless on Solomons

HONIARA, SOLOMON ISLANDS—Landslides and a tsunami destroyed the homes of about one-third of the population in one of Honiara's outlying districts, after a 7.2-magnitude quake hit the Pacific Solomon Islands on Monday, said disaster management office director Loti Yates. Officials said on Tuesday that no injuries were reported over 30 hours after the biggest in a series of quakes churned a tsunami wave that was up to 3 meters high as it slammed into the coast. However, more than 1,000 people have been displaced after some 200 houses were destroyed or [illegible] where 1,000 people live. AP

Double A-bomb survivor dies

TOKYO—TSUTOMU YAMAguchi, the only person officially recognized as a survivor of both the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings at the end of World War II, has died at age 93, media reports said on Wednesday.

Yamaguchi died of stomach cancer on Monday, the most circulation Mainichi, Asahi and Yomiuri newspapers reported.

Yamaguchi was in the Hiroshima on a business trip for his shipbuilding company on Aug. 6, 1945, when a 15-kilogram atomic bomb on the city. He suffered severe burns to his upper body and spent the night in the city.

He then returned to his hometown of Nagasaki, about 300 kilometers southwest, which suffered a second United States atomic bomb attack three days later.

On Aug. 15, 1945, Japan surrendered, ending the war.

Yamaguchi was the only person to be certified by the Japanese government as

YAMAGUCHI AP

having been in both cities when they were attacked, although other dual survivors have also been identified.

"My double radiation exposure is now an official government record. It can tell the younger generation the horrifying history of the atomic bombings, even after I die," Yamaguchi was quoted in the nationwide Mainichi newspaper last year.

His family could not immediately be reached and local officials and Japanese survivor groups could not immediately confirm his death.

In his later years, Yamaguchi gave talks about his experiences for an atomic bomb survivor and often expressed his hope that such weapons would be abolished.

He spoke at the United Nations in 2006, seven months and some about his experiences, and appeared in television documentary about survivors of both attacks.

Last month he was visited in the hospital by filmmaker James Cameron, director of "Titanic" and "Avatar," who is considering making a movie about the bombings, according to the Mainichi.

Immediately after the war, Yamaguchi worked as a translator for American forces in Nagasaki and later as a junior high school teacher.

He spoke to the only country to have suffered atomic bombs. About 140,000 people were killed in Hiroshima and 70,000 in Nagasaki. AP

Child prodigy moves to Malaysia from 'rigid' Singapore

KUALA LUMPUR—A 10-year-old prodigy who passed 10th grade chemistry at age 7 has moved to Malaysia for higher education because his talents languished in too rigid a environment for gifted children, his father says.

Ainun Gabriel Lawley, 10, gained attention when he passed the O Level—or American 10th grade—chemistry examination in Singapore at 7. Two years later, he joined the O level physics exam and the AS Level, or 11th grade, chemistry exam.

However, his luck in the Malaysian Lawley told reporters on Monday that the Singapore government was inflexible and failed to support his son's needs to pursue his intellectual growth.

Ainun attended primary school for three years and was "bored silly," Lawley said.

LAWLEY AP

In an e-mailed response to The Associated Press on Wednesday, Singapore's Education Ministry said it designed an individualized education plan to help Ainun excel. Lawley said the plan was useless because it did not allow his son to study subjects from higher grades.

"What they did instead was to enroll him in the normal curriculum. The standard school standard his mind and put his brain to sleep on a daily basis," he said.

With the help of the National Association for Gifted Children of Malaysia, Lawley and his Singapore-born wife enrolled Ainun in the private-run MUF University College in Kuala Lumpur this week.

Lawley said his son will be joining 20-year olds in studying in a degree program with computer science and chemistry options, as well as adding A-level physics and math to his tally.

"He chose HELP as they understood Ainun's special needs and were willing to do their best to help," he said.

HELP officials said they would offer Ainun a full scholarship. Lawley will also work as a psychology researcher at the college. AP

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 WANG PO II
12:50, 2:05, 4:55, 7:15, 9:35

2 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
PG 13
12:10, 2:30, 4:50, 7:10, 9:40

3 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL XI
2:00, 4:40, 7:25, 10:00

4 AND DARLING KONG ASWANG
2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00

HORRIDLY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
2:00, 4:20, 6:40, 9:00

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The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Gonzalo

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Suspicious bags suspend flights at 2 US airports

FRESNO, CALIFORNIA—SEEMINGLY SUSPICIOUS PIECES OF LUGgage delayed flights at two airports on Tuesday, prompting evacuations in Minneapolis and closing a California airport where authorities discovered what turned out to be soft drink bottles filled with honey.

A passenger's suitcase tested positive for TNT at Bakersfield's Meadows Field during a routine swabbing of the bag's exterior, Kern County Sheriff Donny Youngblood said. When Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officials opened the bag, they found bottles filled with an amber liquid, he said.

The bag's owners, Francisco Ramirez, told TSA officers that the bottles were filled with honey, Youngblood said. Further testing confirmed that honey was the only substance present in the bottles, said National Bureau of Investigation spokesperson Steve Dupre. No traces of explosives were found.

"Who in this day and age would contemplate take a chance carrying honey in forensic bottles?" Youngblood said. "That itself is an alarm. It's hard to understand."

At the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, a bomb-sniffing dog indicated there was something suspicious about a piece of baggage, causing authorities to call a bomb squad and close parts of the airport for more than an hour.

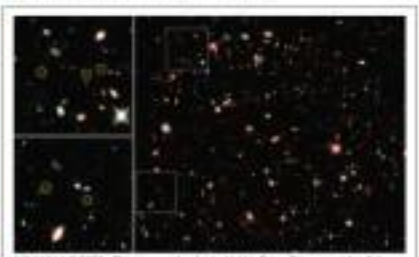
But the bag was never put on a flight and nothing suspicious was found, officials said.

The piece of luggage was only a placeholder as airline employees put on the luggage carousel to signal to other employees that all the bags have been unloaded from a flight, airport spokesperson Patrick Hogan said. In airport jargon, it's called a "bag bag."

"It was kind of a beat-up old bag that was simply used as a marker," he said.

Investigators in California said Ramirez flew to Bakersfield Dec. 23 to spend Christmas with his sister and was returning Tuesday. The 33-year-old gardener from Mexicali, Mexico was not arrested and was cooperating with authorities, officials said.

When TSA agents opened one of the five bottles and tested the contents, the resulting fumes nauseated them, Youngblood said. Both were treated and released at a local hospital. AP



YOUNG UNIVERSE This picture taken by the Hubble Space Telescope on Jan. 5 shows the deepest image of the universe ever taken in near-infrared light. The faintest and reddest objects (left inset) in the image are galaxies that correspond to lookback times of approximately 12.9 billion years to 13.1 billion years. No galaxies have been seen before at such early epochs. AFP

Cuba protests tighter US screening of passengers

HAVANA—CUBA SUMMONED THE TOP United States diplomat on the island on Tuesday to protest steps announced by Cuban emigrants fleeing into the US, calling the rule a "feed the sellers" move to justify America's trade embargo.

The new dispute comes after several months that have all but snuffed out hope for a quick resolution to the half-century of antagonism between Cuba and the US, and as Cuban officials have been increasingly downcast about the new administration in President Barack Obama.

Josefina Vidal Ferreiro, director of the Cuban Foreign Ministry's North American affairs office, said the new security controls were "discriminatory and intrusive."

"We categorically reject that new hostile action by the government of the United States against Cuba," she told The Associated Press in an exclusive interview.

Vidal Ferreiro said she lodged the protest in a 45-minute meeting with Jonathan Farrar, the head of the US Interests Section, which Washington maintains in Cuba instead of an embassy. Cuba's top diplomat in Washington delivered a similar message to State Department officials earlier in the day she said.

The US imposed the strikes security measures on Monday following an apparent attempt by a Nigerian man to blow up a passenger jet as it approached Detroit on Christmas Day.

Among the 14 nations whose citizens will face increased scrutiny are two—Cuba, Iran, Sudan and Syria—that the US government considers state sponsors of terrorism.

Cuba has been on that list since the 1980s, but has always maintained its inclusion had more to do with the United States' antipathy for the Communist government's one-party rule than with evidence that it sponsors terrorism. AP

Slovak man carries hidden explosives

DUBLIN—A SLOVAK MAN UNSTITCHED crucial hidden explosives on board a weekend flight to Dublin after a Slovakian airport security unit went awry, Irish officials announced on Tuesday.

Slovak Interior Minister Robert Kalinak expressed "profound regret" to the Irish government for the oversight and the three-day delay in alerting Irish authorities. Dublin security chiefs said it was foolish for the Slovaks to hide bomb parts in the luggage of unwitting passengers under any circumstances.

Security experts said the episode illustrated the inadequacy of security screening of checked-in baggage. But every point the Slovak authorities had sought to test when they placed real bomb components in nine passengers' bags on Saturday.

Eight were cleared. But the bag containing about 50 grams of RDX plastic explosive traveled undetected through security at Dipoal Bory airport in central Slovakia onto a Dresden Wings aircraft. The Slovak carrier launched services to Dublin last month.

The Dublin Airport Authority confirmed that two incoming baggages is screened in Dublin. The man didn't find out about the explosives cache until Irish police, acting on a Slovak Sp-OE, raided his three-city apartment on Tuesday morning.

Police said they initially were led to believe the man might be a terrorist, until Slovak authorities provided more information about their role in planting the explosives.

Irish Justice Ministers Dermot Ahern said Dublin police eventually confirmed that the explosive "was concealed without the knowledge or consent ... as part of an airport security exercise." AP

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Editor Raul G. Marcelo ● Assistant Editor Carrie S. Martinez

BUSINESS

IN THIS ISSUE
■ RP global bond issue gets Ba3 rating /B4

Low rates to fuel inflation, Citigroup warns

Clamor for exit strategy grows

By Michelle V. Rosca

CITING CONCERNS OVER A LIKELY SPIKE IN INFLATION this year to levels beyond the target range, Citigroup has urged the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to reverse its loose monetary policy stance earlier rather than later.

The financial giant yesterday suggested that the BSP should normalize the interest requirement on banks, after this was brought down from 21 to 19 percent of deposit liabilities in late 2008, and then increase its policy rates immediately after the May elections.

Citigroup, seeking savings from supposedly stable interest rates, said the partial recovery of the world economy from the current turmoil and election-related spending will boost overall demand for goods and services in a manner that could push inflation to levels the government's target for this year.

The BSP has set its inflation target for this year at a range of 4 to 5.5 percent.

"Risky liquidity risk associated with first quarter election spending and the reversion of offshore flows, mainly OFW (overseas Filipino workers) remittances, would add urgency to mitigating the risk of home price-through [inflation effects] from food and energy prices," Citigroup said in its latest commentary on the Philippine economy.

The investment bank expects economies to rise even faster this year, as global economic recovery may increase the labor requirements of firms. A rise in remittances has a tendency to accelerate inflation because money sent home by OFWs drives consumption spending of many Filipino households.

Citigroup also echoed common expectations of a rise in overall demand during an election year, when political candidates spend on campaigns.

Earlier, central bank officials said there was no urgency for it to hike interest rates, citing a benign inflation outlook for 2010 and 2011.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the central bank has leeway to keep its policy rates at current historically low levels and boost the growth of the economy, given that inflation would likely remain tempered.

The BSP's oversight for rowing and lending rates stand at record lows of 4 and 6 percent, respectively. This came after the central bank implemented a series of interest rate cuts from December 2008 to July 2009.

The rate cuts were aimed at encouraging banks to reduce their own lending rates and, thus, spur borrowings.

Stock market edges higher

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE INDEX edged higher on Wednesday, turning a largely listless trading session as investors awaited the fresh leads at the first trading week of the year.

At the end of the range-bound session, PSEi closed at 3,038.93 points, higher by 11.47 points or 0.37 percent.

Investors took a while position yesterday on the fiscal front such as the launch of a $1.5-billion global bond issue to cover its 2010 funding needs, as well as indications that the BIR and Customs will face collection targets for December 2009. **Jhel L. Lasay**

Turn to page B2, col. 1

SMC buys 49% of key shareholder

By Dorian L. Lucas

SAN MIGUEL CORP. YESTERDAY harnessed an already close alliance with businessman Roberto V. Ongpin by approving a deal to buy into the latter's holding firm, which had only recently bought into the diversifying conglomerate itself.

In a statement, SMC said its board of directors approved an investment in Ongpin-led Top Frontier Holdings Inc. through the acquisition of a 49-percent stake via equity infusion.

The move is seen as a measure to consolidate control over the wide shareholder base of SMC, which includes a diversity of private shareholders, foreign investors, farmers groups and the government.

SMC said the deal was conditioned on the holding firm agreeing to back its business thrust, disclosing initial reports that the Ongpin group was poised to take over the conglomerate.

"Top Frontier has agreed to enhance the pursuit of the strategic direction of San Miguel to diversify into infrastructure, telecommunications, mining, energy and related industries," the company said. "As agreed by both SMC and Top Frontier, the composition of the SMC board and management will remain the same."

Top Frontier is an investment holding company, which currently owns 837.1 million common shares or 26 percent of the total outstanding capital stock of SMC.

"In addition, Top Frontier will execute an agreement with Q-Tech Alliance Holdings Inc., which provides for the acquisition of 327 million SMC common shares and an option over the balance of 332 million common shares held by Q-Tech, along with rights over various assets totaling $165," the firm said.

Along with Top Frontier's acquisition of San Miguel shares from Q-Tech, the Ongpin-led duo also announced the offer for SMC common shares, in line with existing rules and regulations of the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Philippine Stock Exchange at P75 per share.

The tender offer is targeted for March 2010.

Top Frontier's investment in SMC was approved by the latter's board premised on the former's undertaking "to pursue an orderly settlement" of SMC shares in order to "broaden" SMC's shareholder base.

Ang, Pangilinan vie for SCTex

By Abigail L. Ho

OF THE SIX GROUPS THAT HAVE EXpressed interest in the operation, management and maintenance of the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway, only two groups are left in the running: the Mirasol Pangilinan-led Manila North Tollways Corp. and Northkeen Management Corp., a joint venture between San Miguel Corp. and San Miguel Corp.

MCIAA vice president for business development Aileen Zoto said the companies controlled by business rivals Pangilinan and Ramon Ang were the only ones that submitted eligibility documents in time for the Jan. 4, 2010 deadline.

"The proponent has been declared eligible yet. They submitted eligibility documents, but there has been no declaration of

AND B2

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Global earmarks $600M for two coal-fired plants

By Amy R. Borres

GLOBAL BUSINESS POWER CORP of the Ayala-led Energy plans to allocate $600 million this year to complete its two coal-fired power plant projects.

"We expect investments this year are to mainly go the expansion sites in Iloilo City and in Toledo City, Cebu. Both projects have a combined cost of about $600 million," said Global president Anna Ricardo.

According to Ricardo, the 246-megawatt (MW) Toledo project broke ground in January 2009 and began construction in the third quarter of the same year.

"We are on schedule and the first unit will be online and synchronized to the grid by the first quarter of 2010. The second unit is expected to be online by June and the last unit by end of the year to make the power plant fully operational by the end of 2010," Ricardo said.

Meanwhile, the 164-MW Panay coal-fired power plant broke ground in September 2008 and construction started in the third quarter of 2009.

The first unit is expected to be in operation by October this year, and the second in 2011, he added.

"The timely completion of the two power plants is in line with our commitment to immediately address the worsening power crisis in the Visayas," Ricardo said.

In June last year, the corporate consortium of P1.6 billion for the Cebu project, the single largest locally syndicated project-denominated, 22-year project loan facility. Eleven banks signed a loan agreement with Cebu Energy Development Corp. (CEDC) for the project.

Consortium members of CEDC include Global Business Power, Aboitiz Power, Vivant Corp. and Formosa Heavy Industries of Taiwan.

Ang . . .

From page B1

eligibility test," she said in an interview. "The SCTEx will undertake maintenance toward tolling."

With a length of 93.77 kilometers, the SCTEx is the longest toll road and potentially the most lucrative, in the country to date.

The contract will give the winning bidder control over the roadway for 23.5 years, or until 2041.

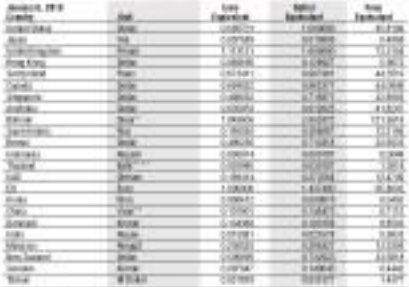
The DOTC is currently evaluating the bids to see if they complied with the agency's requirements.

The deadline for submission of eligibility documents was originally scheduled for Dec. 4, 2009, but was moved to Jan. 4, upon the request of interested parties.

The issuance of the notice of award is slated for Jan. 22, and the contract signing and issuance of the notice to proceed will be on Feb. 22, 2010.

Philippine Stock Exchange

Currencies



BUSINESS

BIR cuts 2010 target to P830B

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE aims at collecting P830 billion this year, or P45 billion less than the original target, according to the agency's top official.

Revenue Commissioner Joel L. Tan Torres expressed confidence that the target would be met, with the BIR ready to implement several tax enhancement measures.

"These measures include, among others, the reorganized Run After Tax Evaders (RATE) program, the integrated approach in administering the country's large taxpayers, focusing on the collection of big-ticket items," Tan Torres said.

He said the BIR intended to sustain its high-visibility public awareness programs on taxpayer service and enforcement campaigns, close monitoring of recently enacted tax-revoking measures and several investment-incentive programs.

In December, the BIR was able to collect P61.55 billion, or P1.32 billion more than its target of P60.03-billion.

This was only the second month in 2009 that the BIR exceeded its target—the first in June when the agency earned its P60.4 billion, 11.7 percent higher than its goal for that month.

Tan Torres was named BIR chief late in November following the resignation of Jose G. Luquiño Jr.

He said one of the factors that helped them up revenue yields in December was the collection of "big-ticket items," referring to a P4-billion payment from a large taxpayer and P1 billion from another.

He added that the year-end success could also be attributed to the BIR's "innovative programs" such as the SunTAX Clinics project, which was aimed at encouraging avid establishments to Christmas bazaars to issue receipts. —Raissa M. Dominguez

RP global bond issue gets Ba3 rating

Barclays Capital, HSBC and Deutsche Bank tapped

By Michelle V. Ramos

MOODY'S INVESTORS SERVICE has assigned a rating of Ba3 and a "stable" outlook on the government's latest $1.3-billion global bond issue, which will be used to fund an even bigger budget deficit this year.

In a statement issued yesterday, Moody's said the rating assigned to the global bonds took into account the country's considerable level of external liquidity, as reflected in the healthy level of its gross international reserves (GIR).

"The Philippines' rating is supported by the country's fairly diversified external payments position and a relatively sound and liquid banking system, which pose no immediate risks to the government's balance sheet," Moody's said.

The credit rating firm went on to say the Philippine should have alternative sources of funds—the GIR and the domestic banking system, if ever it would face difficulties in meeting its financial obligations in the future.

The GIR, which stood at $43.7 billion as of November 2009, is the total amount of foreign currency reserves managed by the central bank. It is boosted by remittances, exports income, borrowings in foreign currencies.

"The historically high level of official foreign exchange reserves—in part bolstered by sizeable overseas remittances—helps to buffer the economy and government's finances from external shocks," Moody's said.

A rating of Ba is one notch below investment grade that indicates risks for investors due to potentially adverse economic events, but it shows the issuer has the means to meet its financial obligations. A numeric modifier of "3" is the lowest in a scale of 1 to 3.

A "stable" outlook means the country will for sustained for at least one year.

Ian Stone, senior vice president and regional credit officer of Moody's, said the outlook assigned to the global bonds took into consideration the expectation of a benign inflation for the Philippines in the short to medium term.

"Low inflation and a stable exchange rate are crucial for the government's debt affordability," he said.

Moody's said funds issued by the Philippines were rated below investment-grade because of the government's fiscal problems.

Barclays Capital, HSBC and Deutsche Bank were hired to sell the global bonds, a government source said yesterday.

Mole power

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Bautista III

RVAT collection hit P61.18B in Sept.

By Raissa M. Dominguez

COLLECTION OF THE DEFERRED value-added tax reached P61.135 billion in the nine months to September 2009, partly due to a law that changed taxation on power to a transaction to franchise tax.

Data from the Department of Finance show that collection of the RVAT for the first three quarters of last year represented 80 percent of the full-year target of P73.383 billion.

The DOF said that the government could have collected P118.83 billion more during the period if not for some provisions under the VAT reform law that reduced the tax take.

Those measures include reduction of excise tax on petroleum products; repeal of the franchise tax on power distribution; repeal of the conditional cash transfer on domestic transport of passengers; repeal of the excise tax on natural gas; and increase of the marginal VAT threshold and of the presumptive tax on agri-based products.

Foregone taxes due to the reduction of excise tax on petroleum products amounted to P8.448 billion, while the repeal on the franchise tax on power utilities accounted for P15 billion.

Meanwhile, the Transco (National Transmission Corp.) Franchise Law or Republic Act No. 9511, which became law in December 2008, scrapped the VAT on the transmission of power.

Finance officials have blamed "revenue-evading" measures such as the 9511 for the dismal revenue, said in 2009 was slower on the budget deficit to almost P295 billion.

Further, RVAT collection on raw materials for petroleum products amounted to P18.83 billion or barely a third of 2008 collections, which reached P58.207 billion.

The actual yield from oil importations also not even half of the 2009 program of P23.6-billion.

From January to September last year, a total of P54.04 billion was collected from VAT on capital equipment and 9% withholding on government purchases.

ICT sector seeking perks from gov't

By Abigail L. Ho

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS technology sector stakeholders are seeking incentives and simplified procedures for its big business, as it prepares to contribute more to national growth and economic development.

Under the E-Growth Plan of the Philippines, various ICT sector development plans were classified as immediate, intermediate and long term, and were grouped into categories such as digital infrastructure, capacity building, e-government service and enabling environment.

The plan was formulated by the Business Processing Association of the Philippines, Computer Manufacturers, Distributors and Dealers Association of the Philippines, and the Information Technology Association of the Philippines.

BPAP executive director Gillian Joyce Vieera said ICT specific incentives were among the three groups' recommendations for the medium term.

The E-Growth Plan also stressed that, for the medium term, the government should provide incentives for the software industry, simplify procedures for product importation, and put up more government-funded technology incubators.

Other medium-term concerns included the development and implementation of a gb broadband plan, as well as the formulation of a national ICT competitive standard and an ICT literacy campaign, Vieera said the long term.

Recommendations that the groups believed should be implemented immediately included an affordable PC program, improved government procurement through technology, better health services with the use of electronic records, and more free-zoned and refined holiday economies.

Pacific Online lotto sales beat goal

By Dante G. Lanao

LOTTO SALES OF THE PHILIPPINE CHARity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) in the Visayas and Mindanao rose sharply last year due mainly to the rollout of a wider distribution network.

In a statement, publicity head Pacific Online Systems Corp.—the exclusive distributor of lotto tickets for both geographic areas—said total revenue from the lottery service rose from P6.49 billion in 2008 to P7.69 billion last year, or an annual increase of 18.5 percent.

"The gain in lottery sales likewise increased the revenues of Pacific Online," its president and CEO Willy Ostia told the bourse.

Lotto's win principally driven by an aggressive commercial rollout, which increased the total number of betting terminals for 2009 to 1,708 from only 1,300 in 2008, representing a 16-percent expansion.

"The significant jackpots during 2009 further spurred the interest of the betting public, thus increasing sales of PCSO," he added.

Another PCSO game service—the exclusive like online Keno—also resulted to higher sales, from P22.3 million in 2008 to P68.67 million last year, representing an increase of 207 percent.

Pacific Online through its subsidiary, Total Gaming Technologies, which is the holder of the equipment lease agreement for nationwide lotto, increased its telkom betting terminals increased from 34 in 2008 to 108 in December 2009.

He added the Pacific Online executive for sales targets for lotto and Scratch-it sales last year.

"The revenue figures will be announced in February," Ostia said. "We expect 2010 to be another exciting year of network expansion and new PCSO products."

The company now has close to 3,000 distribution outlets for the lotto tickets.

DOTC to privatize two provincial airports

By Paolo G. Montecillo

THE GOVERNMENT IS SELLING TWO major airports in the Visayas and to Mindanao, in a bid to raise cash for its overseas pump-priming activities.

In a statement, the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) said it would privatize the old Bacolod Airport in Negros Occidental and the Cagayan de Oro Airport in Misamis Oriental.

The plan to privatize the two state-owned airports will be done through a public process in accordance with Executive Order No. 323, which covers the rules on the government's privatization program, the DOTC said.

Located near industrial areas vital to the economy of Mindanao, the Cagayan de Oro airport is set to be replaced with a newer one, while the old Bacolod airport was recently replaced by a newer facility in Silay City. As a result, the DOTC said it would not make much sense to hold on to these assets.

"Since these two old airports will now be lying idle and under-utilized as a result of the development of the new Bacolod-Silay and Laguindingan airports, the DOTC decided to dispose of them [so that] the proceeds [of the sale] can be used to finance other government infrastructure projects," Transport Secretary Leandro Mendoza said.

He added that the sale aims to optimize the use of the two airports, "which management and operations could be better handled by the private sector."

The new Bacolod-Silay Domestic Airport, which opened in January 2008, is located 24 kilometers north of the 72-year-old terminal it replaced.

Cagayan de Oro's domestic Lumbia Airport, which was named after the host barangay, will be replaced by the proposed Cagayan de Oro International Airport in Laguindingan.

LIFESTYLE Food

MUTS, good source of dietary fat

I don't have to give up 'lechon kawali' for veggie juice to be healthy

KITCHEN RESCUE

Maggie Aghilvar

AFTER THE TOXIC holiday season and seeing my sister Vicky battle illness, I thought the gift of health is the best gift we could give ourselves and those who mean the most to us.

And since health is wealth, I am dedicating the whole January to wellness. The series of articles will teach: Easy ways to detoxify and pick the right food, tips on proper food preparation, recipes, where to source ingredients and how to set up a "wellness" kitchen.

Don't get me wrong. I am not giving up my lechon kawali for carrot and green vegetable juice. Well, not yet. But, it is comforting to know that as we eat to our ears desire, we can use tips to eat our way to good health and, hopefully, to longevity.

With me on this journey to wellness is Dr. Christine Gonzales.

more >>

SALE

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BY FRANCES DRAKE

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Daum

9					4			2
	5			6			1	
		7		1		3		
2					7			
	3					6		
		8					3	
			2			5		1
		1			9		5	
4				2				6

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3	2	5	7	6	8	9	4	1
8	6	2	3	4	1	7	9	5
9	5	4	8	6	7	2	1	3
1	3	7	2	5	9	4	8	6
5	9	8	4	3	6	1	7	2
2	7	6	9	1	5	8	3	4
4	1	3	6	7	2	8	5	9

PDI LIFESTYLE KITCHEN-TESTED RECIPE

What to do with New Year leftovers

By Hanna O. Chikiamco
Contributor

IT LIKE ME, YOU START-ed the New Year with a list of leftovers food, you're probably wondering what to do with them. Here are two recipes that will give new life to two holiday favorites: lechon and ensaymada.

Lechon doesn't always have to be roasted into pulutan. My sisters in law Hanna se makes lechon a-ceto in the oven and it comes out crisp and succulent all over again. As he recommends, you can revive it by spreading it with butter and sprinkling chives and sugar before reheating it in the oven. The sweet-savory mixture not only warms perfect for breakfast or meals.

Baked Lechon

2 k leftover sinuklaw lechon
Lechon liver sauce

If the lechon has been refrigerated, remove from refrigerator and let rest at room temperature for about an hour. Preheat oven to 375 F (190°C) for 15 minutes. Arrange lechon on a rack in a roasting pan. Cover loosely with foil. Bake for 20 minutes. Remove foil and bake for another 10-15 minutes. Slice into serving pieces and serve with lechon sauce.

Ensaimada

4 ensaimada
½ c grated queso de bola

Tips

- If the leftover is not too already been pre-sliced, you can still bake it following directions above.
- To keep the ensaimada moist after reheating it in the oven, cover with aluminum foil.
- Adjust the proportion of the cheese and sugar mixture according to individual taste (i.e., lessen the sugar if you find it too sweet, or add more if you want it sweeter).

ENSAIMADA with cheese and sugar mixture

Cut a slit on the side of each ensaimada but not all the way through. Mix cheese and sugar together. Stuff slit with cheese-sugar mixture. Bake for 10 minutes.

MAKE leftover lechon crisp and an added spin.

D.I.Y.

How to make tasty soup out of ham bones

THE BONES OF CHRISTMAS hams are in my freezer waiting for the day when I can use them to flavor other dishes. The taste of that ham has been one of the bases when boiled for the broth of feature consommés. It was my sister-in-law who taught me to use ham bones to give a different flavor dimension to the mixed of calabasa and sitaw and to enrich the chicken pastel.

My favorite Christmas leftover is the turkey carcass. It is boiled, removed from the excess bones and the picnic are added to create perfect sweet caldo. Little bits of turkey flesh float around, making the concoction more than just two-step.

Cookbooks accuse for those who have more than just the rudimentary cooking skills have a section on how to make stock. Stuff the sweet in broom, standard a bit to deepen the flavor of the stock.

Stock is the flavor base of soups. Soup is my palate refresher. I love to keep it to the side. To sip it every now and then in between the other dishes eaten as well as to prep a fall on the cues to modern Requisite.

Soup starts as what flow pieces in a strainer, soft women, something needed like a warm-up exercise before the meals coming. That way, it's a before appetizer and it doesn't make you too full to enjoy the rest of the meal.

Diet food

Soup is diet food especially those that have clear broth, is fond of whipping fads or wrapping in lamps with the vegetables you season the most and the most used. That way it's not as boring or cold to salad person.

And soup is versatile. My grandmother's cure for fever was a bowl of chicken broth (always blood tigue or rice porridge. But for my own children I made sure we ended with all the flavors coming again from bones, turkey or chicken. To reuse the meat bits back into shape, easy meals should be prone to eat sick.

But I'm not the only soup lover in my family. My father-in-law will not accept his meals without a bowl of soup and it didn't matter if it came from an instant soup pack. By since's son is nicknamed "Sopa" because all he wants to eat is caldo.

Bones and shells leftover from the eating was one of the issues discussed by the team that put together this "leftovers" book. How can we avoid having a mountain of garbage on the plate rolled one in Tagalog? The suggestion was to remove the bones and shells first.

There were many arguments against We hardly filled fish because it's not the way we eat. Shrimp without the head doesn't body as much as before "servings". Why we pay? Why anyone else but leave the head intact to add the tasty flavor the head contains?

The team undeterred that it will take a new generation of cooks to apply these. But with my own family, it has worked. We have even gone so far as cutting the skin and meat of the lechon with a kitchen shears instead of chopping it with a cleaver any which way.

My first food thought this New Year is to take the ham bones, boil it, then add as sotanghon beans. Garnished with scrambled leftovers, it will be not to be what soup is to a stomach warmer, pantry refresher, filled and nutritious.

E-mail: pecuthcook@yahoo.com

I don't have to give up 'lechon kawali' for veggie juice to be healthy

From page C1

Of late, we've spoken to many doctors, practitioners of both western and holistic/alternative medicine. All have been enormously helpful. But it was a call I made to Dr. Christine on behalf of Hanning Ho by that prompted me to do this story.

Perhaps, I needed some comforting when I made that call. I was consoled by her deep faith in God and belief in the abundance of God's gifts found in nature.

There are many problems in health and wellness. Obesity, anorexia, holistic alternatives or a combination of both is a matter of personal choice and it is always best to consult a physician before taking supplements or making drastic lifestyle or dietary changes.

Holiday hang-over

Dr. Christine Gonzalez, MD, PhD (co-founder of Wellness Institute, director of natural medicine) is doctor of naturopathic medicine and has a PhD in natural health and holistic nutrition. An undergraduate in computer science, she shifted to natural medicine after several deaths in her family due to cancer. This led her to study and do extensive research on cancer in the US, the Caribbean and Europe. She is trained in bioinformatics (molecular virology, nutrition stress assessment, biological terrain assessment, medical microscopy), chromotherapy, acupuncture, lymphology and physiology, clinical neurotherapy and quantum physics.

Holiday hang-overs are related not only to food, alcohol and sugar but to emotional stress as well after weeks of rolling of food the three major pitfalls of Philippine diet (fats, sugar, salt).

1. Staying free from lechon, crispy pata, halaan (and too much stress on the liver and elevate bad cholesterol) and sweet good chocolates.

2. Never overeat to weaken the immune system by at least 40%).

3. Drink loaded with soft drinks (sweet coffee) and weaken the kidneys).

Nothing can cut the mother cure cancer of death and disease by more than half or 10%, but a simple diet change can. There is no medicine or surgery that has that power.

Some the steps to overhaul your diet by calling for juice fasts and other trendy diseases. Clean up slowly while taking care of your body.

Focus on nutrient-rich whole foods and cut back on processed foods. Start with three simple steps. Don't worry about your calories and diet in just one week.

Skip simple/processed sugars

White sugar, brown sugar, honey—all types of sugar pump calcium into one's diet and spike blood sugar. Consuming too much of sugar is also causes inflammation, which can increase one's risk for heart disease and certain cancers and stress out body sugar and fatigue. It's best to avoid those foods that list sugar, high-fructose corn syrup or dextrose on the ingredients label.

Indulge in good fats

Fats are important in transporting other nutrients such as vitamins A, D, E and K. They are essential components of the cell membrane and internal fatty tissues. Vegetable sources of dietary fats are nuts, seeds, olives, virgin coconut oil and avocados. Animal sources of dietary fats are fish and ghee (purified butter). Essential fatty acids are very important in the body for cell and organ regeneration, as well as aiding memory and lubrication to nerves.

Speaking of nuts, if you haven't tried the ones that are Dawn imports, you must. Her new shipment arrives this week. Call 0917-3163754.

(To be continued)

In February, I will be in Davao to teach and conduct my Modesto Culinary Heritage Tour. Reservations are ongoing. To order and get a copy of my 2013 Cooking Class Schedules, call 9289508 / 9272088; 4474744 / 0998-1372346.

E-mail the author at inquirer@inquirer.com.ph

ORGANIC veggies

The Maya Kitchen

Start 2010 with a Healthy Diet

Regardless of your dietary goal, you can change the way your body looks and feels when you start the right food.

This New Year, let's commit to a healthy lifestyle. Know the reasons why you should be overweight or underweight. Know the ingredients that are good for your body and those that are not. Learn how to cook healthy meals in a way that you can maintain for the rest of your life.

ONE DAY SPECIALS

Healthy Cooking Diet (Jan. 14, 21 from 1:30 to 5 p.m. Vegetarian Cooking Class) Jan. 14 (Thursday) Vegetarian Cooking Class: Vegetarian Cooking Class: Vegetarian Cooking Class:

Baked prawns, corned tuna—cooked on kitchen stunners

Text by Vargie Baga-Reyes

COOKING SHOULD BE fun and easy especially if you own the latest line of Gaggenau kitchen appliances matched with Bulthaup's sophisticated kitchen workbench and cool cabinets.

"You can make cooking twice interesting in the kitchen by using innovative equipment that always works to your advantage," says Ilenke Ong of Living Innovations Corp., exclusive local distributor of European kitchenware and furnishing brands like Germany's Gaggenau and Bulthaup.

These are the top-of-the-line induction cook tops, ventilators, ovens, refrigerators and wine storage units that are easy to operate and are sleek.

Ong's house in Forbes Park was recently turned into a virtual showroom of these kitchen appliances to prove to media how practical and functional they can be to every household.

The high-tech modular cabinets refrigerators, freezers and wine storage, for instance, are built-in, according to one's kitchen space. They have stainless-steel interiors, spacious aluminum door bins and ice maker with dryer water connection. The freezers contain adjustable storage shelves made out of security glass, including a motorized top shelf that would be raised and lowered over when fully loaded.

"For homeowners who buy bulk groceries, the set or the freezer can also be adjusted to ensure cooling so the food won't be spoiled," says Ong.

PICTURE-perfect kitchen with Gaggenau's high-tech kitchen appliances and Bulthaup's sleek working area

CONTURY Corned Tuna and Artichoke Bruschetta

CHEF Stephanie Zubiri and her easy-to-do pasta al fresco/herbed prawns

FOODIE Marielle Santos-Po works on her tuna appetizer

CHIC Gaggenau coffee maker

NEW fully-integrated modular column wine storage units with glass doors

Favorite appliance

The 24-inch wall-mounted Lift-Oven is just like an "elevator oven." It can be integrated into the area of wall cabinets and operated in eye level in the push of a button, the glass ceramic front of the oven moves down, allowing dishes or trays to be easily placed into the oven.

The Combination Steam and Convection Oven is one of Ong's favorite appliances because it simplifies all cooking processes, from simple baking to cooking and braising. It uses also for sous/vide cooking. Vitamins and minerals are preserved, the natural flavor of the ingredients is enhanced and the food for fat, salt and seasonings is minimized.

Meat and fish cooked with permanent steam remain juicy and tender, while vegetables can be cooked to just the right degree of bite.

"With this steam oven, we are sure regeneration of food. We can cook three different kinds of stuff, such as veggies, fish and rice all at the same time, but it will not mix the aromas even though it has different settings. It's very versatile," explains Ong.

Lastly, the induction cook top allows for precise cooking and heat setting with you need it. Its twist-pad control and a new maneuverable magnetic knob allows for easy selection and control of the cooking zones.

"This new induction technology is as fast and precise as gas, but without the need for exposed flames. One good thing about it is you don't burn anything, even a piece of cloth that you might leave on top of the oven," says Ong. "Once you turn it off, you just take the knob out and, after four seconds, everything turns off. It's kid-friendly."

Interactive demonstration

Ong invited foodie Marielle Santos-Po and chef Stephanie Zubiri to create delectable dishes that would rank in a jiffy when prepared in Gaggenau ovens.

Po, merchandising manager for Cinderella House Brands, dished out Century Corned Tuna and Artichoke Bruschettas. After brushing the baguette with olive oil and topping with tuna and other spices and herbs, she popped it in the convection oven. After a few minutes, the bread came out perfectly toasted and full of aroma.

Zubiri, executive chef and managing director of Modern Epicurean Kitchen, created bread pudding and baked prawns with pesto. It only took her half an hour to finish everything and serve them warm.

Century Corned Tuna and Artichoke Bruschetta

(By Marielle Santos-Po)

- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 loaf crusty baguette, sliced ½ inch thick diagonally
- ½ c shredded red sliced tomatoes
- ½ c sliced canned artichoke hearts
- 3 tbsp chopped onion
- 4 tbsp sliced Kalamata olives
- 180 g Century Corned Tuna
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh flatleaf parsley
- 3 tbsp chopped fresh basil
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1/8 tsp freshly ground pepper
- 1 c shredded mozzarella cheese

Brush olive oil on bread slices. Arrange on a baking tray and broil for about 3-5 minutes or until light brown and crispy. In a bowl, mix together tomatoes, artichoke, onion, garlic, olives, flaked pan-fry and Century Corned Tuna.

Add balsamic vinegar, olive oil and ground pepper. Toss well. Spoon tuna mixture on bread slices. Top with mozzarella cheese and broil until cheese melts. Remove from the oven and sprinkle chopped basil on top before serving.

Makes 6-8 servings.

Bread Pudding

(By Stephanie Zubiri)

- Butter
- Bread
- Eggs
- Cream
- Milk
- Sugar
- Raisins

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly butter a 13x9x2-inch baking dish. Arrange the bread cubes in prepared dish. In a large bowl, whisk the eggs, cream, milk, and sugar to blend. Pour the custard over bread cubes and press the bread cubes gently to submerge.

Let stand for 30 minutes, occasionally pressing the bread cubes into the custard mixture. (Can be prepared 2 hours ahead. Cover and refrigerate.) Bake until the pudding puffs and is set in the center, about 45 minutes. Cool slightly.

Living Innovations showroom is at Makati Shangri-La retail arcade.

Flavors of Spain offered in Boracay

Text and photos by Jun Ramirez
Contributor

WHEN Inquirer LIFESTYLE did an exclusive interview with celebrity chef Sisito Ismail last summer for his TV show "Spain... On the Road Again," my knowledge of Spanish cuisine was limited to paella, callos and churros dowsed with Segovia whole (dining in the Old Country) in Benavidez Circle during the '80s.

Watching Gerzaich Palicos enjoy Spanish dishes in their group answered the Iberian peninsula to a Mercedes convertible, make a pit stop in Alcar, and look and eat in different light. The contemporaneous of Spain—combined with the awesome beauty, wonderful food and culture writes of our former colonizer—made us crave for Spain.

Fuego Hotels & Properties recently invited bloggers (Lifestyle included) to experience Flavors of Spain when it inaugurated Boracay's latest high-end resort called 7Stones Boracay Suites located at Sitio Balabag, a short walk from the main road and away from the mainstream Boracay party crowd.

Boracay is a melting pot of culinary creations from all over the world, given that a lot of foreigners have settled in this 1,000-hectare isle.

Old Spanish cuisine

I was lucky to have tasted the old El Nido Spanish cuisine when it was the hotel of White Beach. Of course, there is still the old reliable Don Silvestre in Sitio Manggayad owned by Blogger Bernardo, who interviewed me also for its now-iconic organic farming at his farm in Caticlan. My Boracay trip in our complete without eating so much food the small island has to offer.

7Stones' food outlet, the 7th Stone Cafe, promises to be the next hot destination for Spanish food in Boracay. On the night of their opening, Fuego Hotels and Properties Managing Director Alfredo Rocha welcomed the sizeable crowd that attended the opening (Fuego Bangar for input), seafood paellas, Albuhe and lemon cervino were served, and 80 bottles of Ramon Bilbao Spanish wines were consumed by partygoers while dancing lasted until 2 a.m.—it could be the town of 7th Stone Cafe during Boracay's peak season. The next day we sat down with Fuego Hotels' executive chef, Spanish-born Miled Arsino to sample the menu he prepared for 7Stones.

Chef Miled was born and grew up in the seaside Basque city of San Sebastian, one of Spain's three culinary destinations, together with Barcelona, Seville and Madrid. The coastal town of San Sebastian is touted to be the summer residence of the Spanish royals in the 19th century when King Alfonso XII built the Palacio de Miramar. Chef Miled eventually moved to Ibiza to perfect his culinary expertise, and when he joined Fuego Hotels, he became at home given that the properties are located in seaside hotspots such as Punta Fuego and, now, 7Stones Boracay Suites.

Just like San Sebastian, Boracay has this second level for lingering outside, or the way to the famous White Beach or to beach, or to D'Mall for some shopping, given that the island is just 7 km long—very small and walkable. And Chef Miled can't be happier to be in Boracay since his preferred ingredients of fresh seafood are readily available.

Good salad

I must admit that the 7Stones salad was really good. It has seven toppings composed of apples, tuna, olives, walnuts, capers, chorizo and anchovies. It is made for sharing, given that 7Stones will be catering to sports enthusiasts. Bobbing Mouth is where all watersports such as kite surfing, sailing and jet skiing are held. The main course, beef cordovino with mushroom sauce and fresh salad, was really good. And its dessert, 7th Stone Mango Cheesecake, was heavenly. The soft cheesecake melts in the mouth together with the frozen mangoes on a bed of soft sponge cake. It's like having dense dessert cakes in one sitting. Looking at 7th Stone Cafe's menu, it has rather limited cuisine as whether the dish is spicy, vegetarian or highly recommended. When I asked Chef Miled his secret for a good paella, he simply said that it's all about the stock. He makes sure he uses good fish stock when cooking paella so that rice gets to absorb the flavor of the seafood.

I may not be able to join Mayte Batoh and Gwyneth Del Rosario on their Spanish food trip, but at least I had my fix of Spanish UH cooking courtesy of Chef Miled's kitchen.

Boracay may not be San Sebastian in Basque Country, but the good-looking resort manager of 7Stones, Dani Allegre, made up for the experience of my brief yet memorable stay in a Fuego Hotel-managed property.

All-Star Café and 7 Stones Boracay Suites is located at Balabag Beach, Sitio Balabag, Boracay Island, Malay, Aklan, and managed by Fuego Hotels & Properties. For reservations, e-mail reservations@7stonesboracay.com or visit www.7stonesboracay.com or www.fuegohotels.com.

PAINTED. Basque for tapas

7THINGS salad with seven toppings

MANGO Cheesecake

Dining Out

Hamburg salad

UCC Park Cafe serves hamburger and salad in one. Served with veggie salad and vinaigrette dressing. Our American steak hamburger with gravy topped with creamy signature mayonnaise will satisfy anyone's appetite. UCC Park Cafe is located at Open Park, Eastwood Mall in Libis, Quezon City (4767268); the other branches are in Power Center Mabuhi City (8184881), Customhaus Hills (6366546), Forbes Town Center (810-1861) and Bonifacio Circle, The Fort (8551447).

New Häagen-Dazs outlet

Häagen-Dazs opens its new outlet at the ground floor of the Midtown Wing of Robinsons Place. Following the global design philosophy developed in the United Kingdom, the new outlet boasts of furniture, textures and dripping cabinet designed in Italy with 60% of its components further enhanced by a backlit Italian paint. The Häagen-Dazs Midtown outlet has more than twenty of delicious, sensual ice-

cream and remarkable flavors. United States Ambassador to the Philippines Kristie Kenney and Robinsons Land Corporation's Business Unit General Manager Cornelio Maga cut the ribbon signifying and ceremonial ice cream scooping with Häagen-Dazs Philippines General Manager Yeo Pangantihan.

Seafood buffet

Crocodile Walking Tour Center Cocotinto offers lunch and dinner buffet. The buffet is also available at Dusitnote Thai Bistro-Alabang, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, 6/L, The Ledge, (SM 8409661), and Crocodile Tiberma Mall, EC (8913601), Rockwell Powerplant Mall offers a la carte dishes (7189482).

COOKING OIL RICH IN BETA-CAROTENE, VITAMINS A AND E

Chef Palm Cooking Oil is rich in beta-carotene and loaded with Vitamin A, which helps ensure good vision, and Vitamin E which helps protect the body against diseases like cancer and blood disorder. Palm oil, extracted from the pulp of the fruit grown primarily in Indonesia, has approximately 35 percent less saturated fat compared to both coconut and palm kernel oil. It is also very versatile. Palm oil has a high smoke point—great for stir-frying, sautéing, grilling and frying. Palm oil is tasteless and odorless, so it can also be used for baking. Chef Palm Cooking Oil is available at selected supermarkets nationwide and is exclusively distributed by JBL88 Marketing.

ENTERTAINMENT

Lito Emerie S. Velarde

'Wedding Crashers' actor weds

LOS ANGELES—"WEDDING CRASHERS" actor Vince Vaughn is a groom. Vaughn's spokesperson, Alan Nierob, said Monday that the 39-year-old actor wed real-estate agent Kyla Weber, 31, in a private ceremony Saturday outside Chicago. The leading man of "The Break-Up" previously dated his co-star Jennifer Aniston. AP

CHEER FACTOR

2009 House Calls

WE WERE WELCOMED INTO SOME VERY private celebrity corners in the past year, via our weekly section, "Somebody." Words that come to mind to recall include "fabulous," "fresh" and "genial." A few were surprisingly simple, some sexually motivated...

Let us revisit some of the staff's —and the readers'—favorites in the next few days, starting with this virtual playroom, actually tenuous recording artist Claire Erin Feeney's bedroom. The vibe on these lady Yahoos!, and the world-class is an antique from England.

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From Panday to Pacman, a simple tip

By Rayvel San Diego Jr.

ACTOR-POLITICIAN RAMON "Bong" Revilla Jr. offers simple advice to boxing champ Manny Pacquiao when it comes to making movies.

While "Ang Panday," Revilla's entry in the Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF), roared to No. 1 at the tills and won a lion's share of awards (including Best Actor for Sen. Bong), Pacquiao's "Pinakasikat" floundered, critically and commercially.

"I think Manny just needs more time to prepare. If he really wants to make it as an actor, he needs to devote time to each project. He needs to be hands-on. That's the most important advice I can give him. He needs time to shoot and promote a movie properly," Revilla told his fellow bapaos.

He is ecstatic about the strong performance of almost all entries in this year's MMFF, sans one no-Uhlio piece.

"I'm happy because all the entries, except for one, made money. I believe it's only because Manny's movie encountered production problems. I heard that they weren't able to finish the special effects. No-doubt. So they didn't have enough time to promote it well."

He insisted that he is not obsessed about being No. 1 at the box office.

"I don't mind even if they say another movie is No. 1," he sighed. "It's just

FROM PAGE E1

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"If doesn't matter if we're No. 1 or No. 2. What is important is that we are able to entertain the viewers," says Metro Manila Film Festival Best Actor Bong Revilla.

From Panday to Pacman...

From page D1

friendly competition. It doesn't matter if we're No. 1 or No. 2. What is important is that we are able to entertain the viewers."

At press time, his action-fantasy flick, which manages Jose Mari Gonzalez as well, has earned over "P40 million after only four days."

"There's a big increase in earnings compared to last year's record," he said.

It's a close fight among the top money-makers—with only a few thousand pesos separating each film.

To what does he attribute the strong showing of almost all the entries this year?

All-star cast

"The festival had an all-star cast. Major stars, all good actors, from Tita Dolphy and Vic Sotto to Sharon Cuneta, joined the festival. Even the directors in this year's fest, the veterans and the newcomers, were all good," he noted.

The early, there is talk of a "Panday" sequel.

"We discussed the sequel at the cast party after the awards night last Monday)," he said. "We really want to do it."

'If Manny wants to succeed as an actor, he should devote time to it'

Admits a lot of time to the sequel."

Since he will be busy with the senatorial campaign and politics, the "Panday" sequel, composed mainly of Bico Gonzalez and Jay Manalo as the rebel officers under Bert Ian, plans to start shooting the compilation of action in the first quarter of the new year.

Perfecting the weighed

"Since I'll be ready to shoot after the election, they'll only need to add my scenes in the special effects shots taken earlier," he said.

This year's MMFF Best Actor said the production teams in Iloilo and EDSA Films have learned a lot from working on "Panday" he used a prequel.

"Whatever mistakes are made in the first one, we want to correct in the sequel. It's all about improving and perfecting the original, which is a tough act to follow," he said.

E-mail: bayanmail@philstar.com

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2 ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
3 ANG PANDAY
4 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
5 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 11
6 MANO PO 6
7 WAPAKMAN
8 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
9 ANG PANDAY
10 MANO PO 6

MANILA

1 WAPAKMAN
2 MANO PO 6
3 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
4 ANG PANDAY
5 ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
6 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 11
7 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE

METRO EAST

1 ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
2 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
3 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
4 ANG PANDAY
5 MANO PO 6
6 WAPAKMAN
7 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 11
8 ANG PANDAY

NOVALICHES

1 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 11
2 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
3 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
4 ANG PANDAY

FORUM ROBINSONS

1 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 11
2 WAPAKMAN
3 MANO PO 6
4 ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG

STA. ROSA

1 ANG PANDAY
2 MANO PO 6
3 ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
4 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
5 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 11

LIPA

1 ANG PANDAY
2 MANO PO 6
3 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 11
4 ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG

DASMARIÑAS

1 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 11
2 ANG PANDAY
3 MANO PO 6
4 NOBODY, NOBODY, BUT JUAN
5 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE

STANMOLLS

1 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 11
2 ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
3 MANO PO 6
4 ANG PANDAY
5 NOBODY, NOBODY, BUT JUAN
6 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE

IMUS

1 ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
2 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
3 NOBODY, NOBODY...BUT JUAN
4 MANO PO 6
5 WAPAKMAN
6 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 11

ANGELES

1 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 11
2 ANG PANDAY
3 MANO PO 6
4 ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG

TACLOBAN

1 MANO PO 6
2 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
3 ANG PANDAY

DUMAGUETE

1 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
2 MANO PO 6
3 ANG PANDAY

BACOLOD

1 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
2 ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
3 MANO PO 6
4 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 11
5 NOBODY, NOBODY...BUT JUAN
6 ANG PANDAY

ILOILO

1 ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
2 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 11
3 MANO PO 6
4 ANG PANDAY
5 NOBODY, NOBODY...BUT JUAN
6 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE

GENSAN

1 WAPAKMAN
2 MANO PO 6
3 ANG PANDAY
4 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 11

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1 MANO PO 6
2 ANG PANDAY
3 SHAKE, RATTLE AND ROLL 11

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SM MARIKINA (EMAX) — Wapakman
SM BACOOR (EMAX) — Wapakman
SM ST. ROSA (NU EMAX) — Wapakman
SM CLARK — Wapakman
SM SAN LAZARO — Wapakman

IMAX DIGITAL

SM MALL OF ASIA
SM NORTH EDSA

DIRECTORS CLUB
I LOVE YOU GOODBYE

PODIUM
I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
DARLING KONG ASAWANG

SM NORTH EDSA (Cinema 1 Via Ramp)

1	WAPAKMAN
2	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
3	PANDAY
4	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
5	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
6	MANO PO 6
7	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
8	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
9	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
10	PANDAY
11	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
12	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE

SM NORTH EDSA (Cinema 7 Via Nobody Nobody But Juan)

1	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
2	PANDAY
3	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
4	MANO PO 6
5	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
6	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
7	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
8	PANDAY
9	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
10	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE

SM MALL OF ASIA

1	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
2	PANDAY
3	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
4	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
5	MANO PO 6
6	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
7	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
8	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
9	PANDAY
10	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
11	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE

SM MEGAMALL

1	WAPAKMAN
2	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
3	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
4	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
5	MANO PO 6
6	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
7	PANDAY
8	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
9	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
10	PANDAY
11	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III

SM CITY MANILA

1	PANDAY
2	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
3	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
4	PANDAY
5	MANO PO 6
6	PANDAY
7	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
8	WAPAKMAN
9	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
10	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE

TRINOMA

1	PANDAY
2	PANDAY
3	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
4	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
5	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
6	MANO PO 6
7	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
8	MANO PO 6
9	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
10	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
11	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
12	PANDAY

SM CITY SAN LAZARO

1	PANDAY
2	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
3	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
4	MANO PO 6
5	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
6	PANDAY
7	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
8	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
9	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
10	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
11	MANO PO 6
12	WAPAKMAN

SM CITY BICUTAN

1	PANDAY
2	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
3	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
4	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
5	MANO PO 6
6	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
7	PANDAY
8	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
9	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
10	PANDAY
11	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III

SM CITY SUCAT

1	PANDAY
2	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
3	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
4	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
5	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
6	MANO PO 6
7	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
8	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
9	PANDAY
10	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III

SM CITY BICUTAN

1	PANDAY
2	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
3	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
4	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
5	MANO PO 6
6	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
7	PANDAY
8	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
9	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
10	PANDAY
11	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III

SM CITY FAIRVIEW

1	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
2	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
3	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
4	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
5	MANO PO 6
6	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
7	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
8	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
9	PANDAY
10	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
11	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE

SM CITY NOVALICHES

1	PANDAY
2	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
3	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
4	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
5	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
6	MANO PO 6
7	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
8	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
9	PANDAY
10	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III

SM CITY BACOOR

1	PANDAY
2	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
3	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
4	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
5	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
6	PANDAY
7	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
8	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
9	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
10	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
11	PANDAY

SM CITY STA. ROSA

1	PANDAY
2	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
3	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
4	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
5	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
6	PANDAY
7	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
8	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
9	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
10	PANDAY
11	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III

SM CITY LIPA

1	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
2	PANDAY
3	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
4	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
5	PANDAY
6	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
7	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
8	MANO PO 6
9	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
10	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
11	PANDAY
12	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III

SM CITY BATANGAS

1	PANDAY
2	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
3	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
4	PANDAY
5	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
6	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
7	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
8	PANDAY
9	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
10	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
11	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
12	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
13	PANDAY
14	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
15	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE

SM CITY STA. ROSA

1	PANDAY
2	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
3	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
4	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
5	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
6	PANDAY
7	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
8	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
9	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
10	PANDAY
11	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III

SM CITY LUCENA

1	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
2	PANDAY
3	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
4	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
5	PANDAY
6	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
7	WAPAKMAN
8	MANO PO 6
9	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
10	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
11	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
12	PANDAY
13	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
14	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
15	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
16	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
17	PANDAY
18	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
19	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
20	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
21	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
22	PANDAY
23	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
24	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE

visayas • mindanao

CITY BACOLOD

1	PANDAY
2	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
3	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
4	PANDAY
5	MANO PO 6
6	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
7	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG

CAGAYAN DE ORO

1	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
2	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
3	MANO PO 6
4	PANDAY

CITY DAVAO

1	PANDAY
2	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
3	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
4	PANDAY
5	MANO PO 6
6	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
7	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG

CITY GENSAN

1	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
2	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
3	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
4	PANDAY
5	MANO PO 6
6	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
7	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
8	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG

CITY BACOLOD

1	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
2	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
3	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
4	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
5	MANO PO 6
6	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
7	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
8	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
9	PANDAY
10	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
11	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE

CITY ILOILO

1	ANG DARLING KONG ASAWANG
2	I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
3	PANDAY
4	NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
5	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III
6	MANO PO 6
7	WAPAKMAN
8	SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL III

ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS NOW ACCEPTED IN ALL SM CINEMA BRANCHES

A decade's worth of thanks

#EDSE SOS, I MEAN THAT literally. Hindi ko alam kung a 3-year-old caught a cold and so pinasuot-suotan ko ng sombrero and jacket.

Pero ewan ko, slightly under the weather, which means I'm out of kaabalahan about the house. I do have that luxury though...I don't really have to get up and work for another couple of days.

I'm using this as an opportunity to think ... and thank God for the blessings of the past year. Since 2010 is the beginning of a new decade, I thought to list down 10 blessings (and relative-or-else) from the past 10 years that I'm truly thankful for. We don't have a Thanksgiving Day in these parts, so let the arrival of the New Year be mine.

Dear God, thank you:

1) For being able to wake up every single day, and say, "I have the best job in the world." I know that not a lot of people get to say that, so I am always grateful that I can.

2) That I have the mother and brother that I have. Yes, my mother does drive me crazy, and I don't get to see my brother as much as I would like to now, but throughout my entire life they have been my lifelines. The life that I lead can be lonely, and these two have been my primary sources of companionship, grounding and sanity, as I'm not fluid about everywhere doing what I do. I don't know where I'd be without them.

3) For my wonderful, loving husband and my absolutely fabulous daughter. I know to me their last little flair for over "The One" was the heavenly choirs. Both my heart and mind instantly know. Alyssa Sison is perfect for more than eight years and still haven't gotten tired of each other.

4) For my daughter, with every day comes a new gem of joy—a word, a phrase or a line from a song that she sings, a step she day and the smell of her baby cologne.

5) That I have the family that I do have—it's large and in dialogue. I'm super-lolly thankful that my relatives are so spread out, so they

Lea Salonga

are. This has enabled me to call me a world traveler, for it seems that I discover I'm based anywhere for four last year, I was home because there was a member of my family residing there. Check out that list: Vancouver, Toronto, Los Angeles, New York and Austin, just to name a few.

New creative outlets

6) That new and interesting creative outlets have presented themselves to me. I especially thank Bobby Garcia for asking me to coach a couple of his budding ladies a few years ago, and to Kuya Allkpedo for being a most effective "messenger" for the Legends. I never once thought of myself as either a coach or (anyone, suppose) a writer with a weekly deadline to meet. The Lord works in mysterious ways, and I'm only too happy that the opportunities arrived.

7) For the friends that I have—the most funny, artistic, creative and supportive friends I could ever wish for. We have the rare luxury of taps and shows, hotel stays, road trips, lunches, long walks, long talks, homecooked meals, sleepovers and birthdays. They are more than just friends, they are my soul mates and my family. My heart is enriched each and every time one of them crosses my path, and I am thankful for their presence in my life.

'Miss Saigon' plus

7) That I was able to perform in quite a number of musicals ("Miss Saigon" in 2000, "Flower Drum Song" in 2001 and 2002, "Baby" in 2004, "Les Misérables" in 2007, and "Cinderella" in 2008-09) and your youngest play ("Trese" in 2002). Box office receipts (and critics' reviews) notwithstanding, I learned from, and fell in love with, the people that I worked with. It was with such gleeful delight that I got to sing beautiful love songs with beautiful leading men. Iterated to dance with a bamboo stick, because you of an all-Asian cast in the United States!), raised a drunken-ing Broadway musical-loving audience to their feet to sing and dance in the aisles, and inflicted with a loud sense (and still) crimes, singing with my head on my chest.

With good formula, I trust this decade with another musical, "Cats," playing a very damaged and subsisting character.

8) For the opportunity to do concerts. It was thanks to my touring schedule that I've been able to visit many places I dreaded (amazing support 11, Hello Manalang airport 22, Dimitri (amazing support 9, Cebu) which I visited for the first time while pregnant with Alex), and a love of dedication to the 10-seat Gawad. It was also in the last decade that I got to perform in some of the leading concert venues in the world: Carnegie Hall in New York City, The Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, The Wong Kong Cultural Center in Hong Kong, and The Esplanade Concert Hall in Singapore. I'd like to thank my management team in the Philippines and the US for making all of this possible.

9) For technology, in many of you know, I am a certified geek. I love technology in its many forms: desktop and laptop computers, cellular telephones, gaming consoles, video recording handphones, CD players, portable gaming devices, flash drives, portable external hard drives, iReaders, and portable MP3 players.

To the set up line allowed me to keep in touch with my loved ones and stay on top of work with the greatest of ease. So I say a prayer for everyone at Apple Computer and Microsoft that they keep doing what they're doing. After God blessed us and every one of you.

10) For just being alive.

Shameless stuff

Congratulations to my brother Gerard and his wife DJ, that's having a girl! Whoa, we have another little princess to spoil!

And don't forget, "Rose Songs" the concert is coming to Resorts tomorrow, Jan. 8, 7:30 p.m. at the University of La Salle Auditorium, and Cebu, Jan. 16, 8 p.m. at the Shrestrean Hotel. See you (Hi!)

Hey yo, Ne-Yo!

Miss Good Grooming 2010

For her child, she said "Home Along Da Riles" starred by Sitwata del Rosario-Hipara will be crowned Miss Good Grooming Philippines 2010 tomorrow at the Ben Gonzales Auditorium, Araneta Center, Quezon City.